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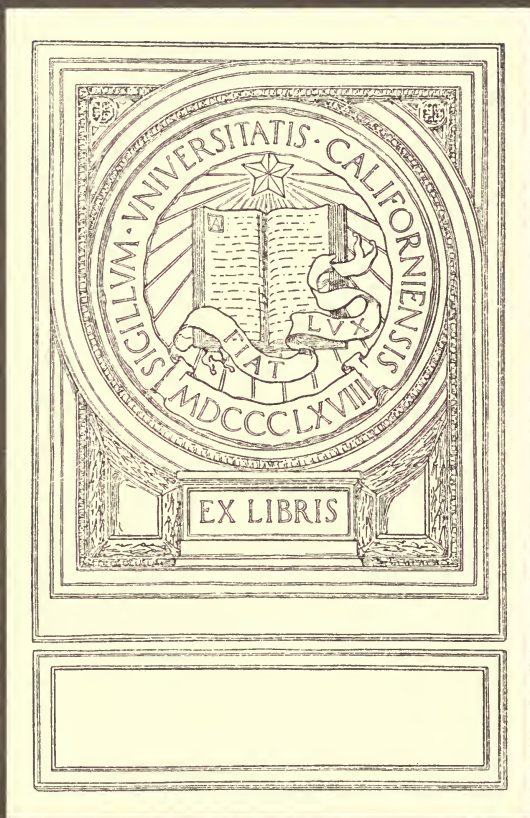
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NOTES

ON THE

PERSONAL MEMOIRS OF P. H. SHERIDAN

BY
CARSWELL McCLELLAN,

BY

CARSWELL McCLELLAN,

BREVET LIEUTENANT-COLONEL U. S. VOLS.



ST. PAUL

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PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.

PROMINENT among the heroes of our late Civil War, was the General familiarly known as Phil. Sheridan. This brave officer was born in Somerset, Perry County, Ohio, on the 6th of March, 1831. He was graduated at the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1853, and in July of that year, was assigned to the 1st Infantry as brevet second lieutenant. He was ordered to Texas where he served until 1855, when he joined the 4th Infantry, and going to the Pacific Coast he served in Washington and Oregon Territories until the fall of 1861. From December of that year, to March of the following one, he was assigned as chief quartermaster and commissary of the Army of the Southwest. He afterwards served, in like capacity, on the Staff of General Halleck, in the Corinth campaign. In May he was appointed colonel of the Second Michigan Cavalry, and took part in the successful expedition to destroy the Mobile and Ohio Railroad at Booneville, Mississippi. In June he defeated Forrest's cavalry. Taking command of the 2d brigade of cavalry, he repulsed and defeated a superior Confederate force under Chalmers, at Booneville, in July. For his gallantry in this fierce engagement he was commissioned brigadier-general of volunteers.

In September he was transferred to the Army of the Ohio, and commanded General Gilbert's left division at the battle of Perryville.

In the advance to Murfreesborough, in December, he led a division under General McCook, and much of the successful issue of the battle of Stone River was due to him. In this battle he rose to the rank of major-general of volunteers. The signal service rendered at the battles of Missionary Ridge and Chickamauga, by Sheridan, added still further to his renown. When Grant was promoted to be lieutenant-general he applied for the transfer of Sheridan to the East, and appointed him chief of cavalry of the Army of the Potomac, where he routed the Confederate cavalry in several engagements.

PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.

In the battle of Winchester, Sheridan defeated Early. The fruits of this victory were five cannons, six or seven thousand small-arms, and five thousand prisoners. The loss of the Confederates was not less than seven thousand. He pursued General Early, who retreated to Fisher's Hill. Here a battle ensued on the 21st of September. It was waged with varying success until evening. The Confederates were then driven from their intrenchments in great confusion. Eleven hundred prisoners were taken, sixteen pieces of artillery, besides wagons, horses, &c. In a week Sheridan had destroyed half of Early's army, and sent the rest "whirling up the Valley of the Shenandoah." To prevent any further raids upon Washington from this direction, he devastated the region so thoroughly that it was said, "If a crow wants to fly down the Shenandoah, he must carry his provisions with him."

Early was quickly reinforced, and under cover of a dense fog surprised the Union army at Cedar Creek, on the 19th of October, and drove it in confusion. Sheridan heard the cannonading at Winchester, thirteen miles away. Putting spurs to his steed, he never stopped till, his horse covered with foam, he dashed upon the battle-field shouting, "Turn, boys, turn; we're going back." His presence rallied the men, and, attacking the Confederates, who were busy plundering the captured camp, they routed them with great slaughter.

Though Sheridan had lost seventeen thousand men, he had virtually destroyed Early's army. This campaign, of only a month's duration, was one of the most brilliant of the Rebellion. The thanks of Congress were bestowed upon the army and its gallant leader, and on the 8th of November he was appointed major-general of the regular army. He commanded at the battle of Five Forks, where he gained a decisive victory, and captured upward of six thousand prisoners at Sailor's Creek, in April, 1865. Finally, in co-operation with General Grant, he compelled the surrender of General Lee, the trusted leader of the Confederate army. Near Appomattox Court House, on the 9th of April, the remains of the army of Virginia laid down their arms and turned homeward. This affair ended the war.

During the next two years General Sheridan performed most valuable service in Texas and Louisiana. He enforced the Reconstruction Acts, for which he was removed by President Johnson in August, 1867. In September he was transferred to the Department of the Missouri. In March, 1869, he was promoted to be lieutenant-general, and assigned to the command of the Division of the Missouri.



Phil. H. Shondan

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“To vindicate a citizen unjustly assailed, is the duty of all men who properly estimate the value of individual character and its influence on the public good.”

—REVERDY JOHNSON.

NOTES.

THE WILDERNESS

AND

SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE.

On April 6, 1864, in compliance with orders from the War Department, Major-General Philip H. Sheridan assumed command of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac. That corps needs no eulogy here. Around the standards of its regiments clung memories of Virginia lowland fields and fords, of Loudon's glades, and Blue Ridge passes, of Maryland's hills and vales, and Gettysburg's fields and roads, that time cannot blur or language brighten. From its records, clustering around that of the heroic Buford, flashed many a name that told of knightly deed and daring. There was no small honor held, no slight obligation taken, with the chieftainship of that veteran command.

On examination, it is obvious that the official reports of General Sheridan, as published in Volume II, Supplemental Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, 38th Congress, 2d Session, constitute, as far as General Sheridan is concerned, "the record" so confidently referred to by General Grant

in the preface to his Personal Memoirs. Interest in these reports, and in General Badeau's Military History of U. S. Grant and General Grant's Memoirs, is revived by the publication of the "Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan." In what relates to the Army of the Potomac, these last memoirs add but little to the volume of statements contained in the preceding companion and complementary works, but they invite attention by furnishing explanation of much that hitherto has seemed to many anomalous and perplexing.

For a quarter of a century past, all criticism, or argument, or narration, tending to support, or defend, the reputations of the veterans of the Virginia battle fields, as against statements, or implications, or claims, made by, or on behalf of, Generals Grant and Sheridan, has been met by clamorous charges of jealousy. General Sheridan's Memoirs are an interesting commentary upon this line of argument.

Commencing on page 353 of his first volume, he re-states from his report of May 13, 1866, in brief, that his new command presented a fine appearance; that the showing, so far as the health and equipment of the men were concerned, was good and satisfactory, but that the horses were thin and worn down by excessive and, it seemed to him, unnecessary picket duty; that from the very beginning of the war the enemy had shown more wisdom respecting his cavalry, and that at that very time he (the enemy) was husbanding the strength of his horses by keeping them to the rear so that they might be in good condition for the impending campaign. He says that, before and after a review of his troops a few days after he had assumed command, he took in the situation and determined to remedy it if possible;

that, while he knew it would be difficult to overcome the custom of so subordinating the operations of the cavalry to the movements of the main army that in name only was it a corps at all, still he thought it his duty to try. He states that, in fulfilment of that duty, he sought an interview with General Meade and informed him that, in his opinion, as the effectiveness of his command lay mainly in the strength of his horses, the duty the cavalry were then performing was both burdensome and wasteful; that cavalry should be kept concentrated to fight the enemy's cavalry; that moving columns of infantry should take care of their own fronts; that, if he (General Meade) would let him (General Sheridan) use the cavalry as he contemplated, there need be little fear as to attacks upon the trains or flanks and rear of the army, as it was his object to defeat the enemy's cavalry in a general combat, if possible, and by such a result to establish a feeling of confidence in his own troops that would enable him, *after a while*,* to march where he pleased destroying the communications and resources of the enemy. He does *not* state, however, what substitute he suggested to General Meade to be used in place of the cavalry arm of the Army of the Potomac until such time as the desired confidence had been acquired by his corps, and the enemy's resources were destroyed, or in the event of the failure of his efforts to engage and defeat the enemy's cavalry in a general combat. He states that, though at different times during General Meade's command of the Army of the Potomac the cavalry had been massed in considerable bodies for special purposes, and that, though the interview resulted in his command being relieved from much harassing picket service, still he received but little en-

* Note. All italics are the present writers, unless noted.

couragement from General Meade whose convictions were opposed to the proffered suggestions. Those convictions General Sheridan states were, in brief, that the cavalry commander should be so located that the commander of the army could give to that arm such "detailed directions as, in *his* judgment, occasion required;" that cavalry was fit for little more than guard and picket duty, the protection of trains, and the covering of the fronts and securing the flanks of moving infantry columns—that they were, in fact, so widely divergent from his (General Sheridan's) opinions that disagreements arose during the battles of the Wilderness. He says further: "*Conscious that he [General Meade] would BE COMPELLED sooner or later either to change his mind or partially GIVE WAY TO THE PRESSURE OF EVENTS, I entered on the campaign with the loyal determination to aid zealously in all its plans.*", and he states that, after the battles of the Wilderness, "the cavalry corps became more of a compact body, with the same privileges and responsibilities that attached to the other corps—conditions that never actually existed before."

It is needless to comment upon how unkindly the concluding words just quoted reflect upon General Hooker's cherished reputation as the organizer of the cavalry corps. It cannot be necessary to recapitulate the record of that corps under orders received from General Meade, in order to amend General Sheridan's assertion of the views held by his superior; and it would be wearisome to cite authorities as to the functions of the cavalry arm. It would seem to be superfluous to enlarge upon the manifest fact that, while the Army of Northern Virginia lay securely guarded by the encircling homes of friends

every one of whom was constantly on picket, the Army of the Potomac, immediately confronting the Confederate army, was camped on hostile ground and surrounded by directly opposite conditions. It is hardly worth while to refer to Shiloh, or Murphreesboro, or Mauassas Junction. The point worthy of notice is, that, while General Sheridan confesses (Vol. I. p. 342) he was but slightly acquainted with military operations in Virginia when, on March 23, he was ordered to report for duty in that state, nevertheless, immediately after he had assumed his new authority, he felt fully competent to depreciate the command to which he had been elevated and to spurn the record of the men who, within the setting of many another clash of steel, and carbine volley, and thunder of horse artillery, had—led by Generals Buford and Gregg, under the command of General Pleasanton—through the long hours of June 9, 1863, crossed sabres with the Cavalry Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia urged on by its dashing chief and his able subordinates Generals Hampton and the Lees;—who, under General Buford, had met and held the advancing Confederate infantry on that July 1, made ever memorable in history by their staunchness;—and who, under Generals Gregg and Custer, on the third day of that same July, received their old acquaintances of the Southern “long sword, saddle and bridle,” upon their advent on the decisive battle field of the war, with a welcome that never after left their memories. Nor did he hesitate to instruct in elementary military science, and enlighten as to his duty and privileges in connection with the cavalry of his command, his superior officer—a veteran distinguished in both military and civil life before General Sheridan had been

graduated—who had participated in all the campaigns of the Army of the Potomac and, on unsought assignment by the President, had for ten months been its commander. He says: “My proposition seemed to stagger General Meade not a little,”—and it well may be believed, for, if words have any meaning, that proposition was, in effect, that General Meade should unconditionally surrender the control of his cavalry corps, and the safeguard of the army for whose efficiency he was responsible, into the hands of a comparatively unknown officer who appeared to believe that the operations of the main army should be subordinated to the unrestricted discretion of the commander of the cavalry arm. General Sheridan’s *Memoirs* clear away any doubts that may have been left upon the subject by the accounts of either General Badeau or General Grant.

It is believed that even a careless reader must note one result of the want of harmony between General Meade’s convictions and General Sheridan’s aspirations in that the accounts of the cavalry operations during the Wilderness battles and the movement to Spottsylvania Court House, as given by General Sheridan in his report of May 13, 1866, and as repeated by Generals Badeau and Grant, and as now again repeated, with some variations, by General Sheridan (*Vol. i. p. 359 et seq.*), are thinly veiled arraignments of the intelligence of General Meade and, to use a mild expression, unsoldierly disparagement of the authority of the commander of the Army of the Potomac.

After reciting the order in which the divisions of his corps crossed the Rapidan on May 4, 1864, and the positions and duties assigned to each, together

with the location of his own headquarters at Chancellorsville, General Sheridan states that *his* orders to General J. H. Wilson, who with his division had preceded the Fifth Corps in the movement, had located that officer at Parker's Store, but that, *on the morning of May 5, by direct order of General Meade*, General Wilson was moved toward Craig's Meeting House; that the movement resulted in serious embarrassment to General Wilson; and that an order from General Meade directing him (General Sheridan) to go to General Wilson's relief was *the first intimation* he received that General Wilson had been pushed out so far. His report of May 13, 1866, does not contain this concluding statement, however, and Generals Badeau and Grant evidently missed the point that General Sheridan intended to make. On page 192 of his second volume, General Grant says:—

My orders were given through General Meade for an early advance on the morning of the 5th. Warren was to move to Parker's Store, and Wilson's cavalry—then at Parker's Store—to move to Craig's Meeting House.

The *circular order* for the movement, as issued by command of General Meade, commences:—

Headquarters, Army of the Potomac.

May 4, 1864, 6 p. m.

Orders.

The following movements are ordered for the 5th of May, 1864:

1. Major-General Sheridan, commanding Cavalry Corps, will move with Gregg's and Torbert's divisions against the enemy's cavalry in the direction of Hamilton's Crossing. *General Wilson, with the Third Cavalry Division, will move at 5 a. m., to Craig's Meeting House, on the Catharpin Road.*

General Humphreys states (The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865) that the order for General Sheridan's movement was issued at General Sheri-

dan's suggestion, he having reported during the 4th that he had received information that the main body of the enemy's cavalry was in the direction indicated. It is presumable that General Sheridan read the order as quoted, and was therefore aware of the movement intended to be made by General Wilson. In his report of May 13, 1866, he says:—

It was now well understood that the enemy's cavalry at Hamilton's Crossing had joined General Lee's forces, and the necessity for my moving to that point, *as ordered*, was obviated.

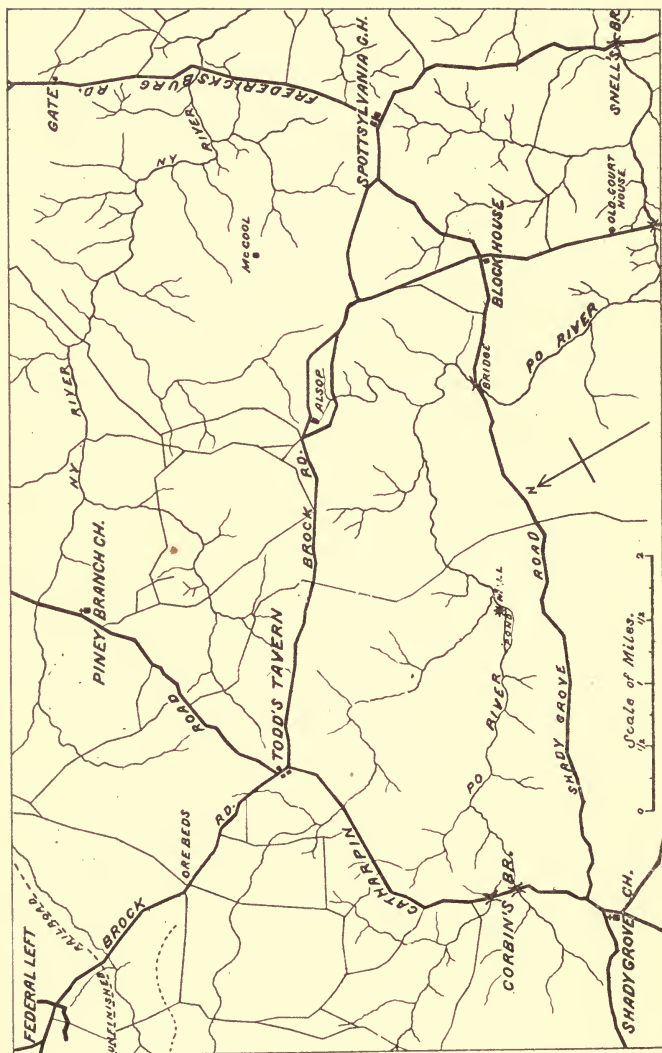
On page 362 of the first volume of his Memoirs, however, he expresses it:—

Information . . . that the enemy's cavalry about Hamilton's Crossing was all being drawn in, reached me on the 5th, which obviated all necessity for my moving on that point *as I intended at the onset of the campaign*.

On pages 103 and 104 of the second volume of his History, General Badeau says: “ . . the Brock Road is the key to all this region; . . . Cutting all these transverse roads at right angles, it enabled whichever army held it to outflank the other, and was, of course, of immense importance to both commanders.” This is now well understood by all readers of war history, as is also the fact that, in the Wilderness battles, General Hancock's command, holding the intersection of the Brock Road with the Orange Plank Road, extending to within about two miles of Todd's Tavern and resting in the impenetrable forest that stretched on both sides of the Brock Road to that point, constituted the left flank of the Federal army.

General Sheridan states that he was held responsible for the safety of the left flank of the army and the trains, and that he secured these objects, after Custer's and Devin's brigades had been severely engaged at the Furnaces, by holding the line of the

Brock Road beyond the Furnaces, and thence around to Todd's Tavern and Piney Branch Church, and felt that the line taken up could be held, but that General Meade, on false report, became alarmed about his left, and sent him a note, signed by General Humphreys and dated at one o'clock P. M. May 6, which stated: "General Hancock has been heavily pressed, and his left turned. The Major-general commanding thinks that you had better draw in your cavalry so as to secure the protection of the trains,"—and that, in obedience to this order, he drew all the cavalry close in toward Chancellorsville, and thereby was subjected to heavy loss in regaining the points abandoned, when the orders for the movements of May 7, were received. Generals Grant and Badeau omit all reference to this matter, and General Humphreys says: "The drawing in of the cavalry the day before did not oblige them to fight on disadvantageous ground on the 7th, nor under any other adverse conditions." But suppose the results to have been as General Sheridan alleges, to whom should censure belong? *He states that he felt able to hold the line he had occupied for the express purpose of securing the protection of the trains, which was all the one o'clock dispatch required. He also states that he was responsible for the safety of the left flank of the army,* and General Grant corroborates the statement when he says (Vol. 2. p. 197): "On the morning of the 6th Sheridan was sent to *connect with Hancock's left* and attack the enemy's cavalry who were trying to get on our left flank and rear." General Sheridan does *not* state, however, how it happened that *he, with this responsibility resting upon him,* was ignorant of the erroneousness of the report upon which General Meade, in the dense and



deadly forest-tangle to which he was condemned by General Grant, had based his dispatch; and he offers no explanation of the fact that no apparent effort was made to determine the exact condition of affairs before surrendering a tenable line holding the needed Brock Road, and before abandoning Todd's Tavern — *the key to the Federal left*.

General Sheridan states (Mem. Vol. 1, and Report of May 13, 1866), that, to remedy what he was satisfied was a misunderstanding upon which the order for the movement of *the trains*, on May 7, had been issued: "Gregg attacked with one of his brigades on the Catharpin Road, and drove the enemy over Corbin's Bridge; Merritt . . . attacked with his division, on the Spottsylvania Road, driving him toward Spottsylvania, and Davies's brigade of Gregg's division made a handsome attack on the Piney Branch Church Road, uniting with Merritt on the Spottsylvania Road."; that the enemy were pursued "almost to Spottsylvania Court House; but *deeming it prudent* to recall the pursuers at dark, he [I] encamped Gregg's and Merritt's divisions in the open fields to the east of Todd's Tavern." It is about two miles from Todd's Tavern to the junction of the Piney Branch Church Road and the Brock (Spottsylvania) Road, and something over three miles from that junction to Spottsylvania Court House, and the movement described by General Sheridan had, before his withdrawal, secured to him the most difficult and thickly wooded portion of the line.

The following is a copy of General Meade's order

for movement under which General Sheridan was supposed to be acting:—

Headquarters Army of the Potomac.

May 7th, 3 p. m., 1864.

Orders.

The following movements are ordered for to-day and to-night:

1. The trains of the Sixth Corps authorized to accompany the troops will be moved at four o'clock p. m., to Chancellorsville, and parked on the left of the road, and held ready to follow the Sixth Corps during the night march.

2. The trains of the Fifth Corps authorized to accompany the troops will be moved at five o'clock p. m., to Chancellorsville, following the trains of the Sixth Corps and parking with them, and held ready to follow those trains in the movement to-night.

3. The trains of the Second Corps authorized to accompany the troops will be moved at six o'clock p. m., to Chancellorsville, and park on the right of the road, and held ready to move at same hour with the other trains by way of the Furnaces to Todd's Tavern, *keeping clear of the Brock Road which will be used by the troops.*

4. Corps commanders will send escorts with these trains.

5. The Reserve Artillery will move at seven o'clock by way of Chancellorsville, Aldrich, and Piney Branch Church to the intersection of the road from Piney Branch Church to Spottsylvania Court House, and the road from Alsop's to Block House, and park to the rear on the last named road, so as to give room for the Sixth Corps.

6. *At half-past eight o'clock P. M. Major-General Warren, commanding the Fifth Corps, will move to Spottsylvania Court House by way of the Brock road and Todd's Tavern.*

7. At half-past eight o'clock p. m. Major-General Sedgwick, commanding the Sixth Corps, will move by the pike and plank roads to Chancellorsville, where he will be joined by the authorized trains of his own corps and those of the Fifth Corps; thence by way of Aldrich's and Piney Branch Church to the intersection of the road from Piney Branch Church to Spottsylvania Court House and the road from Alsop's to Block House. The trains of the Fifth Corps will then join its corps at Spottsylvania Court House.

8. Major-General Hancock, commanding Second Corps, will move to Todd's Tavern by the Brock Road, following the Fifth Corps closely.

9. Headquarters during the movement will be along the

route of the Fifth and Second Corps, and at the close of the movement near the Sixth Corps.

10. The pickets of the Fifth and Sixth Corps will be withdrawn at one o'clock A. M., and those of the Second Corps at two o'clock A. M., and will follow the routes of their respective Corps.

11. The cavalry now under the command of Colonel Hammond will be left by General Sedgwick at the Old Wilderness Tavern, and upon being informed by General Hancock of the withdrawal of his corps and pickets will follow that corps.

12. Corps commanders will see that the movements are made with punctuality and promptitude.

13. *Major-General Sheridan, commanding Cavalry Corps, will have a sufficient force on the approaches from the right to keep the corps commanders advised in time of the approach of the enemy.*

14. It is understood that General Burnside's command will follow the Sixth Corps.

By command of Major-General Meade,

S. Williams,

Asst. Adjutant-General.

It will be observed that by this order General Sheridan was relieved from responsibility for the trains, which were to be parked on the left flank of the army, and it is manifest that his especial instructions *pre-supposed and necessitated his occupation of the Brock Road, for without that the instructions of the orders could not be obeyed.*

It is noticeable, and significant, that General Sheridan omits all reference to the proposed movements of *the infantry and artillery* from his account of his operations during the afternoon and evening of the 7th. It is true General Grant states (Vol. 2. p. 210): "During the 7th Sheridan had a fight with the rebel cavalry *at Todd's Tavern*, but routed them, thus *opening the way* for the troops that were to go by that route at night," and possibly this may be taken as an endorsement of General Sheridan's announcement to General Meade "that moving columns of infantry should take care of their own

fronts," but, even if justification of his neglect of the manifest requirements of the orders of his commander can be found in that theory, the fact that possession was disputed by *Confederate cavalry* still devolved upon General Sheridan the duty of securing the road under his other dictum—"our cavalry ought to fight the enemy's cavalry, and our infantry the enemy's infantry." It would seem, therefore, that he should have furnished for the information of the future historian some more definite, and more pleasantly comprehensible, reason than he has vouchsafed for the surrender of what he had gained, and for his failure to comply with the requirements of the order from Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac.

The allegation that interference by General Meade with the orders given by General Sheridan after he had "encamped Gregg's and Merritt's divisions in the open fields to the east of Todd's Tavern," prevented the occupation of the approaches to Spottsylvania Court House by the Federal cavalry and enabled the enemy to secure possession of that point, originated in General Sheridan's official report of May 13, 1866, and was embodied by General Badeau in his *Military History of U. S. Grant*. The feebleness of the attempted aspersion of General Meade, in the interests of General Sheridan, was clearly exposed by General A. A. Humphreys, in "The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865," but, nevertheless, the story was repeated by General Grant in his *Memoirs*, and is now again asserted, with a slight variation, by General Sheridan on pages 365 and 366 of his first volume. He says:—

General Grant now felt that it was necessary to throw himself on Lee's communications if possible, while preserving his

own intact by prolonging the movement to the left. Therefore, *on the evening of the 7th* he determined to shift his whole army toward Spottsylvania Court House, and *initiated* the movement by a night march of the infantry to *Todd's Tavern*. In view of *what was contemplated*, I gave orders to Gregg and Merritt to move *at daylight on the morning of the 8th*, for the purpose of gaining possession of Snell's Bridge over the Po River, the former by the crossing at Corbin's Bridge and the latter by the Block House. . . . During the night of the 7th General Meade arrived at Todd's Tavern and modified the orders I had given Gregg and Merritt, etc., etc.

Space forbids the unnecessary repetition of the details of the unanswerable (re-assertion is not an answer) refutation of this astonishing confusion of time, place, circumstance, and imagination, so persistently asserted. It is sufficient to note only two or three points.

We have already seen General Meade's order as issued to his command. On page 208 of his second volume, General Grant gives *his* order, upon which General Meade's was based. It commences:—

Headquarters, Armies of the U. S.

May 7, 1864, 6:30 a. m.

Major-General Meade,

Commanding A. P.

Make all preparations during the day for a *night march to take position at Spottsylvania C. H. with one corps*, at Todd's Tavern with one, and another near the intersection of the Piney Branch and Spottsylvania road with the road from Alsop's to Old Court-House.

General Sheridan's own order to his cavalry, which General Meade is said to have modified and rendered ineffective, as it eventually reached General Gregg, is as follows:—

May 8th, 1 a. m.

Move with your command *at 5 a. m.*, on the Catharpin Road, crossing at Corbin's Bridge, and taking position at Shady Grove Church. *General Merritt will follow you*, and at Shady Grove Church will take the left hand, or Block House Road, moving forward and taking up position at that point [viz., Block House]. Immediately after he has passed, you will move forward

with your division, *on the same road*, to the crossing of Po River, where you will take up position *supporting* General Merritt. General Wilson with his division will march from Alsop's by way of Spottsylvania Court House and the Gate to Snell's Bridge, where he will take up position. . . . *The infantry march to Spottsylvania to-night.*

It is very clear from these orders alone that General Sheridan is in error in stating that General Grant, *on the evening of the seventh*, determined upon the Spottsylvania movement and *initiated it by a night march of the infantry to Todd's Tavern.*

Generals Badeau, Grant, and Humphreys concur in fixing the time of General Meade's arrival at Todd's Tavern at about midnight. The divisions of Generals Gregg and Merritt at that time lay in bivouac confronting the enemy, the former upon the Catharpin Road, and the latter upon the Brock Road, so as to clear the ground around the Tavern. Discovering that General Sheridan was not with his troops, and that both Generals Gregg and Merritt were without orders; and knowing that the head of the Fifth Corps column would soon arrive, and that instant action was necessary to any possible success in the movement *which had commenced*, General Meade gave the orders for the only dispositions that then remained practicable for the cavalry. He gave his instructions at *one o'clock a. m.*, himself writing the orders, and also the notification sent to General Sheridan, and *did not countermand or modify the order of General Sheridan, for that officer's orders reached the troops after those of General Meade had been issued.* That General Meade's orders could not have prevented the success of General Sheridan's plans and combinations, is abundantly shown by the fact that, *at, and from, the time when General Sheridan's orders were written, the roads upon which he ordered his troops to*

operate from Todd's Tavern were held in force by the moving columns of the enemy. This fact is established beyond the reach of controversy by the official reports of Generals Pendleton, Anderson, Ewell, and Early, of the Confederate Army; by the official report, and by the Personal Memoirs (vol. 2. page 211) of General Grant; by General Badeau's Military History (vol. 2. page 138); and by General Sheridan himself when, on page 368 of his first volume, he states that General Warren, assaulting Spottsylvania Court House on the morning of the 8th, encountered General Anderson's (Longstreet's) corps. That corps was known to have been in position in the Wilderness lines at eleven o'clock on the night of the 7th and could not have reached Spottsylvania Court House, as correctly stated by General Sheridan, except via the Catharpin and Shady Grove roads. It may also be well to note here that Snell's Bridge, the possession of which is insisted upon as of *the utmost importance* by Generals Badeau and Sheridan, is situated about *two miles south* of Spottsylvania Court House, *entirely out of General Lee's line of march*, and, although open to them, *was not used* (see official reports) *by the Confederate Army in this movement.*

Referring again to General Sheridan's order of May 8th, 1 a. m., it will be noted that it entirely ignores *the presence of the Confederate cavalry upon the Brock Road.* When General Merritt received his instructions from General Meade, his command lay *in contact with this cavalry force*, probably, about a mile east of Todd's Tavern. The subsequent arrival of the infantry produced no such confusion at the front as is claimed by Generals Badeau and Sheridan. The writer can affirm this of his own personal

knowledge, supported by the statement of General (then Lieutenant-Colonel) Fred. T. Locke, Assistant Adjutant-General, Fifth Army Corps, that upon the arrival of the head of the infantry column at Todd's Tavern he found the road blocked by the Provost Marshal's train and the headquarters escorts—as had also occurred at General Hancock's headquarters soon after the column had started—and that it became absolutely necessary to halt there and wait for light. General Merritt commenced his efforts to clear the road immediately on receiving his orders about one o'clock a. m. General Warren, with the head of his column, reached the headquarters of the cavalry division about *three o'clock a. m.*, when he halted and massed his troops *in the rear of the cavalry*. At General Merritt's suggestion, when near the Alsop forks of the road, General Warren relieved the cavalry skirmish line with his infantry about *six o'clock a. m.*, and not “about 11 o'clock” as stated by General Sheridan. The Fifth Corps then advanced along the Brock Road and assaulted the enemy holding that road near the Court House at the same time that General Wilson's cavalry division pushed through upon the Fredericksburg Road. The report of General W. N. Pendleton, Chief of Artillery, Army of North Virginia, says:—

About 9 a. m. of the 8th the head of the column came in sight of the Court House, and found the enemy just getting into view on the Fredericksburg Road, driving back a small cavalry force which there opposed them. *At the same time a strong infantry column* assailed another cavalry force which disputed their advance on the Todd's Tavern Road.

In his report of May 13, 1866, and in his Memoirs, General Sheridan states that when he learned of the orders given to Generals Gregg and Merritt by General Meade he for a time had fears for the safety

of General Wilson, but that General Wilson *held Spottsylvania Court House until driven out by General Anderson's command*. He quotes a despatch sent to him by General Wilson at 9 o'clock a. m., of May 8th, which says:—

Have run the enemy's cavalry a mile from Spottsylvania Court House; have charged them, and drove them through the village; am fighting now with a considerable force, supposed to be Lee's division. *Every thing all right.*

Evidently General Wilson was oppressed by no fears as to his own situation, and the report of General Pendleton, just referred to, bears testimony to the effective fire of his guns which opened "a flank reverse fire" upon the deploying forces of the enemy. General Badeau (Vol 2, p. 141. foot note) says:—

As soon as Sheridan learned the change which Meade had made in the orders to Merritt and Gregg, and the consequent isolation of Wilson, *he sent orders to that officer to fall back from Spottsylvania.*

General Sheridan makes no mention of this order in either his report or Memoirs, but the report of General John Bratton, C. S. Army, states:—

We moved . . . to Spottsylvania Court House, and arrived in the vicinity on the next morning (the 8th) *at about 10 o'clock* to find the enemy's cavalry in possession of and between us and the court house. My brigade formed on the right of the road and moved down to the court house, *the enemy retiring before us and abandoning the place without a fight.*

General Wilson was "all right" at nine o'clock and certainly, with the advancing Fifth Corps in sight, would not have retired as General Bratton describes at ten o'clock, *except in obedience to orders.*

Having been relieved by the infantry of the Fifth Corps, General Merritt's division remained upon and along the Brock Road, awaiting orders, until about eleven o'clock, and was then withdrawn to

the rear. There was in the army no gallanter command than that division whose brigades were led by Devin, Custer and Gibbs. There was but one thing that prevented its movement to the left of the advancing infantry and to such coöperation in the assault upon the Court House as would speedily have effected a junction with General Wilson's division and the repulse of the Confederate forces. The one thing preventing was the absence of "a loyal determination to aid zealously in all the plans" of the campaign on the part of the commander of the Cavalry Corps, who, to use again his own words, allowed two divisions of cavalry to remain practically ineffective by reason of disjointed and irregular instructions from their commander. The official returns place the strength of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac at about twelve thousand men, and that of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia at about eight thousand men. General Sheridan states that, after furnishing the various details necessary for detached duty, he crossed the Rapidan with an effective force of about ten thousand troopers. A similar deduction from the reported strength of the Confederate Cavalry would put General Stuart's effective force at less than seven thousand. General Sheridan had been very positive in his assurance to General Meade that if allowed to go out and hunt for the enemy's cavalry, he could soon destroy it. On the 7th of May, 1864, *the Confederate troopers confronted him*. He was hampered by no orders other than to place himself in position to give due warning of any approach of the enemy upon the right of the army; and yet *he claims for himself* that he deemed it prudent to surrender the Brock Road to the enemy's

cavalry, and thus suffered the advance of the army to be checked at Todd's Tavern, and that, when on the morning on the 8th opportunity offered to retrieve the error, he withdrew his troops and neglected to aid in the assault upon Spottsylvania Court House. *The Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac had never had such a record put upon it before.* Even General Badeau wails: "It certainly seems that a greater degree of vigor shown by the corps commanders at the front would not have allowed the prize of the entire movement to slip from their grasp,"—and General Badeau is right in all save the use of the plural. *General Sheridan was the only corps commander who could, or should, have been at the front when the success of the movement was possible.*

It is difficult, and by no means pleasant to any true American, to understand how a General commanding the Army of the United States could have written General Sheridan's account of his interview with General Meade a little before noon on May 8th, 1864. Doubtless General Meade did exhibit some traces of "peppery temper" on that occasion. There can be found on record few military saints who, in the presence of the enemy, could, or would, quietly submit to being charged with imbecility in their command, and defied in their authority, by a subaltern. Officers have forfeited life, as well as honor, for less than General Sheridan claims.

However, with this interview, and its results, General Sheridan has given to the world the key to the intricacies of the Military History and Personal Memoirs of General Grant, as they relate to the Army of the Potomac and its Commander.

He states that, when General Meade visited General

Grant at the headquarters of the Armies of the United States, and there, in relating the circumstances of the "acrimonious interview" just had, mentioned that General Sheridan had asserted that he could whip Stuart if he (General Meade) would only let him, General Grant's reply was, "Did he say so? Then let him go out and do it;" that the intimation was immediately acted upon by General Meade, and that a little later he received from that officer his orders for the "Richmond Raid." General Grant, however, gives a somewhat different coloring to the matter. In volume 2, page 153, he says: On the 8th of May, just after the battle of the Wilderness and when we were moving on Spottsylvania *I directed Sheridan verbally* to cut loose from the Army of the Potomac, pass around the left of Lee's army and attack his cavalry:" General Humphreys expresses it: "At 1 p. m., *by order of General Grant*, General Sheridan was directed to concentrate his available mounted force and move against the enemy's cavalry, ..." At noon of May 8, General Meade's headquarters were near Todd's Tavern, and General Grant's were at Piney Branch Church, about two miles from the Tavern. The described interview with General Sheridan; the visit to General Grant's headquarters and the conference with the Lieutenant-General; the giving of the necessary instructions, and the issuing of the one o'clock order for the raid; very fully occupied the little more than an hour from the time when General Sheridan says that General Meade sent for him. No one has stated at what time on the 8th of May, before one o'clock p. m., General Grant took occasion to give his verbal instructions to General Sheridan.

General Badeau (Vol. 2, p. 52) states that, on

the recommendation of General Grant, General Buell was promptly dismissed from the army when he declined to accept the offer of the command of a corps under General Sherman, his junior in rank. General Sheridan, if the language of his Memoirs has weight in evidence, neglected the orders and rebelled against the authority of his superior and commanding officer, and Lieutenant-General Grant ordered him to the separate command that he coveted. It remained, however, for the last General of the U. S. Army *to boast* of the fact to the country that had elevated him, and to leave the, at least, questionable precedent as a legacy to the Army for whose *esprit* and discipline he was thought to have been intelligently responsible.

What, better than his own words, can indicate the nature of the "events" that General Sheridan was "conscious," even before the opening of the campaign of 1864, would produce the "pressure" under which General Meade "would be compelled sooner or later to change his mind or partially give way?" Certainly no clearer light than their own pages furnish need be thrown upon the *animus* of the Military History and the Personal Memoirs of General Grant, in connection with the Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan.

It is unnecessary to make any comparison between the conduct held by General Meade toward General Sheridan and that confessed by General Grant toward General Meade. Even Generals Grant and Badeau are forced to acknowledge that General Meade was a very loyal gentleman and soldier.

Some months after the preceding pages were written, the report of the Association of the Gradu-

ates of the U. S. Military Academy, June 12, 1889, has been published containing a memoir of General Sheridan by General Jas. H. Wilson. It is believed that expressions used therein relieve this memoir of much of the sanctity usually accorded to obituary writings and permit the use of brief reference and quotation here.

General Wilson relates that, by open mutiny on parade and by assault upon a Cadet Sergeant whose duty required that he should reprimand and report Cadet P. H. Sheridan for offences against discipline, Cadet Sheridan earned a suspension of a year which turned him back one class in his course at the Military Academy. The account concludes with the unique eulogium:—

In this incident the boy displayed the MOST MARKED characteristic of the man, and the one to which he was PRINCIPALLY INDEBTED for the high rank and great distinction which he reached in the war of the Rebellion.

After this frank confession by one of General Sheridan's most persistent and enthusiastic panegyrists, one reads with some surprise, a little further on, the statement:—

He was not one of those pedantic grumbling fellows who always knew more than their commanding officer and never approved the plan they were expected to carry out. He was THE PRINCE OF SUBORDINATE COMMANDERS, and by his unfailing alacrity won his way straight to the confidence of those in authority over him.

Still a little further on, and General Wilson is moved to admiration of the fact that General Sheridan "never failed in a doubtful situation to contend to the utmost for victory, *nor to claim it strenuously whether he had clearly won it or not.*"

In connection with this last quotation, the following extract from the concluding paragraphs of

General Sheridan's official report of May 13, 1866, is not without interest:—

It will be seen by this report that we led the advance of the army to the Wilderness; that on the Richmond raid we marked out its line of march to the North Anna, where we found it on our return; that we again led its advance to Hanover town, and thence to Cold Harbor; that we removed the enemy's cavalry from the south side of the Chickahominy by the Trevillian raid, and thereby materially assisted the army in its successful march to the James River and Petersburg, where it remained until we made the campaign in the valley; marched back to Petersburg, and again took its advance and led it to victory.

It is believed that, unless, perhaps, in the pages of the Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, this paragraph cannot be surpassed in military literature.

FIVE FORKS.

In the History of the Second Army Corps, the author, General Francis A. Walker, referring to the removal of General Warren from his command after the battle of Five Forks, Va., April 1, 1865, remarks:—

What is infinitely to be regretted is, that the brilliant and fortunate successor of Grant and Sherman did not, when the heat of action had passed, when the passions of the moment had cooled, himself seize the opportunity which his own power and fame afforded him, to take the initiative in vindicating the reputation of one of the bravest, brightest, and most spirited of the youthful commanders of the Union Armies. It would not have diminished the renown which Sheridan won at Yellow Tavern, Cedar Creek, and Five Forks, had he welcomed an early occasion to repair the terrible injury which one hasty word, in the heat of battle, had done to the position, the fame, and the hopes of the man who snatched Little Round Top from the hands of the exulting Confederates.

Neither General Adam Badeau, sixteen years after the battle of Five Forks, nor General Grant, five years later, nor General Sheridan, two years later still, have been able to comprehend this fact stated by General Walker; and yet, General Badeau, unquestionably speaking for, and of, his principals, with due rhetorical introduction announces that, "*no one but a hero is fit to command armies.*"

Imaginings of Deity take many an awkward and

grotesque shape while worship advances from fetichism to enlightened adoration, and between the denial of the valet and the verdict of history there are many varying and often contradictory applications of the title Hero. In the quotation just made, General Walker has suggested one line of thought connecting generalship with heroism. General Badeau, more in accord with so-called practical conceptions, somewhat limits his ideal by the dogma, "in military matters nothing which is successful, is wrong." As yet another perception, the words of the late Mr. Chas. Gibbons, of Philadelphia, are suggestive. Said Mr. Gibbons:—

Heroism is not an uncommon virtue. There are others more rare and no less essential in forming the character of a great soldier. All American soldiers North and South, have proved themselves heroes, but we cannot expect to find in every one a Thomas, a Washington or a Meade. Such men are not common in any country. They seem to be set for special occasions and as examples. They do not thrust themselves into notice. They do not come swaggering into the history of the times. They are not vain-glorious nor envious. They "bear their faculties" meekly, and are guided by a better cynosure than their own personal renown.

It is purposed to glance briefly at the account now given by General Sheridan of the part taken by General Warren, with the Fifth Army Corps, in the battle of Five Forks. While General Sheridan's final statements and arguments add nothing to assertions already often repeated, a consideration of the method and circumstance of their persistent presentation may throw light upon the character of the heroism of that officer and his consequent right to command the following of soldiers, or the attention of the public, to the prejudice of an illustrious contemporary.

In his account of the operations of March 30,

1865, General Sheridan's first reference to General Warren mentions (Vol 2. p. 146) the hasty call he made at the headquarters of that officer in the afternoon, after his visit to General Grant's headquarters, and states that he found General Warren "speaking rather despondently of the outlook, being influenced no doubt by the depressing weather." The remark is worthy of note only because it is the first of a series of statements. Considering the condition of affairs at General Grant's headquarters, as described by General Sheridan, there is not much to occasion surprise or comment in the statement. General Sheridan continues: "From Warren's headquarters I returned by the Boydton Road to Dinwiddie Court House, *fording Gravelly Run with ease.*" The brevity and, in connection with succeeding assertions, the evident intent of this statement, call to mind certain portions of the evidence given before the court of inquiry ultimately convened as one of the results of the operations under consideration. On pages 1034-5 of the Proceedings of the Warren Court of Inquiry, the following is recorded in the testimony of General U. S. Grant:—

Cross-examination by Mr. Stickney, counsel for the applicant:

Q. When you say "previous conduct," you mean, of course, your understanding of his previous conduct?—A. Certainly; of course, always my understanding.

Q. You would admit quite as readily as any other man in the world that you might have made a mistake in your judgment upon those past matters?—A. *I am not ready to admit that; no, sir.*

Q. What you claim is not that you cannot make a mistake, but that you did not make a mistake?—A. I have no doubt I made many mistakes, *but not in that particular.*

Q. In this particular you do not think you did make one?—A. *No.*

On page 57 of the same record—General Sheri-

dan being under examination by Mr. Stickney—we find:—

Q. What papers have you referred to in making up this statement which was read before the court?—A. I have taken copies from the original papers in the War Department.

Q. Have you had or used any other papers than these copies now in your possession in preparing your present statement?—A. None that I know of except an extract from the report of General Pickett.

Q. Did you have a pamphlet of General Warren, among other things?—A. Yes; *sir*, I did not consult it, I never read it.

Q. You did not use that then?—A. No, *sir*.

A recent critic has said in laudation of General Grant:—"To any one who knew much of Grant's peculiar mental traits, it would be quite easily believed that when Grant had asserted either matter of fact or of opinion he quite naïvely assumed that the burden of proof was on him who questioned it. . . . His quiet but undoubting confidence in himself was one of the conditions of his great successes." As the century opened, many were, in like manner, enraptured by Napoleon—the self-crowned Emperor of the Continent—because he "appeared to be of bronze." To-day, there are few who doubt that but for the character evinced in that same much lauded "monumental" carriage the pathway of the Emperor of France would not have led through Moscow to St. Helena. It is something other than naïve self-confidence that—relying upon the support of credulous popular prejudice acquired—stolidly ignores all argument, or fact substantiated, in correction of its assumptions.

The insinuation in the manner of General Sheridan's statement that he forded Gravelly Run with ease late in the afternoon of March 30, while a good illustration of the pertinacity in which he rivaled his

friend and commander General Grant, cannot be classed as ingenuous or heroic. It was indelibly in evidence before the Warren Court of Inquiry (Record pp. 155-7) that, on the night of March 31, Gravelly Run, at the crossing of the Boydton Road, had been swollen by rain till it was flowing bank-full and was not fordable for infantry, but that the necessary bridging was pushed with such energy that the march of General Ayres's division to the relief of General Sheridan was in no way retarded thereby. Of this fact General Sheridan could not plead ignorance. On page 90 of the record of the court, we find that request was made by the President of the court that the Secretary of War would authorize the court record to be printed from day to day, assigning the following as one reason for the application:—

Lieutenant-General Sheridan is represented by counsel; and as his public duties will not permit of his attendance through all the sessions of the court, the printing of the record from day to day *will be of service to him* in enabling him intelligently to aid the court in its inquiry, as well as to all concerned.

After a characteristic account of the action between his cavalry command and the forces under General Pickett, on March 31, General Sheridan (Vol. 2. p. 154) continues:—

By following me to Dinwiddie the enemy's infantry had completely isolated itself, and hence there was now offered the Union troops a rare opportunity. Lee was outside of his works, just as we desired, and the general-in-chief realized this the moment he received the first report of my situation: General Meade appreciated it too from the information he got from Captain Sheridan, *en route* to army headquarters with the first tidings, and sent this telegram to General Grant:

“Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac,

“March 31, 1865. 9.45 P. M.

“Lieutenant-General Grant.

“Would it not be well for Warren to go down with his whole

corps and smash up the force in front of Sheridan? Humphreys can hold the line of the Boydton Plank Road, and the refusal along with it. Bartlett's Brigade is now on the road from G. Boisseau's, running north, where it crosses Gravelly Run, he having gone down the White Oak Road. Warren could go at once that way, and take the force threatening Sheridan in rear at Dinwiddie, and move on the enemy's rear with the other two.

"G. G. Meade, Major-General."

An hour later General Grant replied in these words:

"Headquarters Armies of the United States,
"Dabney's Mills, March 31st, 1865. 10.15 P. M.

"Major-General Meade,

"Commanding Army of the Potomac.

"Let Warren move in the way you propose, and urge him not to stop for anything. Let Griffin go on as he was first directed.

"U. S. Grant, Lieutenant-General."

These two despatches were the initiatory steps in sending the Fifth Corps under Major-General G. K. Warren, to report to me, . . .

In explanation of General Grant's reference to General Griffin, General Sheridan adds in a foot-note: "Griffin had been ordered by Warren to the Boydton Road to protect his rear."

Again General Sheridan has neglected the record printed, at public expense, in great part for his convenience and benefit, even to the extent of a very imperfect rendering of General Meade's despatch of 9:45 p. m.—see record page 125.

At about five o'clock p. m. of March 31, General Warren received from General Meade's headquarters a despatch, dated 4:30 p. m., in which he was directed to secure his position on the White Oak Road; informed that it was "believed that Sheridan is pushing up"; and authorized, if he thought it worth while, to push a small force down the White Oak Road to "try to communicate with Sheridan; but they must take care not to fire into his advance." Before this despatch was received the attention of

General Warren, and of his command, had been attracted by the sound of General Sheridan's engagement, and, as the firing was heavy and evidently receding in the direction of Dinwiddie Court House, General Warren, not in consequence of the despatch, but—to use his own expression—in consequence of his duty as a soldier to send re-enforcement, if he could, in the direction of a portion of our Army that was evidently hard pressed, *on his own responsibility ordered General Bartlett to march at once toward the firing and attack the enemy in the rear* (Record. pp. 232, 720, 768, 1175). General Bartlett obeyed this order promptly. At 5:45 p. m. General Warren received another despatch from General Meade's headquarters, dated 5:15 p. m., directing him to “push a brigade down the White Oak Road *to open it for General Sheridan*, and support the same if necessary.” General Warren answered by the following report:—

5:50 p. m. March 31.

General Webb:

I have just seen an officer and a sergeant from General Sheridan who were cut off in an attack by the enemy and escaped. From what they say, our cavalry was attacked about noon by cavalry and infantry and rapidly driven back, two divisions, Crook's and Devin's, being engaged. The firing seems to recede from me toward Dinwiddie. I have sent General Bartlett and my escort in that direction, but I think they cannot be in time.

I hear cannonading that I think is from near Dinwiddie C. H.

Resp'y G. K. Warren, Maj. Gen.

This was received at General Meade's headquarters, probably about 6:20 p. m., and was undoubtedly the subject of General Meade's missing despatch of 6:35 p. m. to General Grant, the receipt of which is acknowledged in General Grant's telegram of 8:45 p. m. to General Meade. Captain M. V. Sheridan (Record. page 212.) testified that he

reached General Meade's headquarters, *en route* to General Grant with General Sheridan's message, about 7:30 p. m., and this agrees with General Meade's despatch to General Grant dated 7:40, March 31. It is evident therefor that General Warren at 5:50 p. m. sent to the headquarters of the Armies the first information of General Sheridan's discomfiture, and *at the same time gave assurance of aid promptly attempted in the most effectual manner.* Although ignored by the officer who in defiance of orders neglected to open the Brock Road for General Warren on May 7, 1864, and who ordered two divisions of his command to march *away from* the sound of General Warren's opening battle on the morning of May 8, 1864, the record is established beyond possibility of candid question.

About 6:30 p. m., General Bartlett having been gone more than an hour, General Warren received from General Webb a despatch saying:—

A staff-officer of General Merritt has made a report that the enemy has penetrated between Sheridan's main command and your position. This is a portion of Pickett's division. Let the force ordered to move out the White Oak Road move down the Boydton Plank Road as promptly as possible.

To this General Warren at once replied:—

I have ordered General Pearson, with three regiments that are now on the plank road, right down toward Dinwiddie C. H. *I will let Bartlett work and report result,* as it is too late to stop him.

At 8 p. m. General Warren received the following order from General Meade:—

Despatch from General Sheridan says he was forced back to Dinwiddie C. H. by strong force of cavalry supported by infantry. *This leaves your rear and that of the Second Corps on the Boydton Plank Road open and will require great vigilance on your part.* If you have sent the brigade down the Boydton plank it should not go farther than Gravelly Run, *as I don't think it will render any service but to protect your rear.*

At 8:20 p. m. General Warren replied as follows:—

I sent General Bartlett out on the road running from the White Oak Road and left him there; he is nearly down to the crossing of Gravelly Run. This will prevent the enemy communicating by that road tonight. I have about two regiments and the artillery to hold the plank road toward Dinwiddie C. H.

It seems to me the enemy cannot remain between me and Dinwiddie if Sheridan keeps fighting them, and I believe they will have to fall back to the Five Forks. If I have to move to-night I shall leave a good many men who have lost their way. Does General Sheridan still hold Dinwiddie C. H.

At 8:40 p. m. General Warren received the following "confidential" despatch:—

The probability is that we will have to contract our line to-night. You will be required to hold, if possible, the Boydton Plank-Road and to Gravelly Run. Humphreys and Ord along the run; be prepared to do this on short notice.

In answer General Warren sent the following:—

8:40 p. m., March 31, 1865.

Genl. Webb, C'h'f. Staff:

The line along the plank road is very strong. One division, with my artillery, I think can hold it. If we are not threatened south of Gravelly Run, east of the plank road, Genl. Humphreys and my batteries, I think, could hold this securely and *let me move down and attack the enemy at Dinwiddie on one side and Sheridan on the other*. From Bartlett's position they will have to make a considerable detour to re-enforce their troops at that point from the north.

Unless Sheridan has been too badly handled I think we have a chance for an open field fight that should be made use of.

Resp'l'y. G. K. Warren.

At 8.50 p. m. General Meade received instructions from General Grant to draw the Fifth Corps back to its position on the Boydton Road and send, at once, a division of the corps down that road to the relief of General Sheridan. At 9.17 p. m. General Warren received from General Meade his orders for drawing back, and instructions to send General Griffin's division to General Sheridan. At 9.35 p. m.

the orders were issued to the divisions of the corps. At 9.50 p. m. General Warren was notified that the division intended for General Sheridan's relief should start at once. At 10 p. m. he reported to General Meade the conditions of the withdrawal of his command from the White Oak Road, and that, *in order to save time*, General Ayres's division would be sent to Dinwiddie Court House in place of General Griffin's. At 10.15 p. m. General Meade confirmed this substitution of General Ayres for General Griffin, having in the mean time sent the 9.45 p. m. despatch to General Grant, suggesting the movement indicated without reference to General Warren's despatch of 8.40 p. m.—probably on account of General Grant's known prejudice against that officer.

Details have here been given in order to show the character of the record ignored by General Sheridan. That record shows that General Griffin's division was not "sent by Warren to the Boydton Road to protect his rear", as stated by General Sheridan, but that, on the contrary, General Bartlett's brigade of that division was *kept in position to threaten the rear of the enemy confronting General Sheridan until withdrawn in compliance with peremptory orders from General Grant*, and further, that, at the very time General Grant was issuing his order obliging that withdrawal, General Warren was suggesting to General Meade the proposition imperfectly quoted by General Sheridan as evidence that Generals Grant and Meade realized and appreciated the rare opportunity that had been placed within their reach by the Parthian¹ tactics of the cavalry commander. All

1. On page 109, Vol. 2, General Sheridan, again referring to his repulse on this same March 31, states: "the turn of events finally brought me the Fifth *after my cavalry, under the most trying difficulties, had drawn the enemy from his works,* . . ." but in his sworn statement, submitted in writing to the Warren Court of Inquiry (Record, page 51), he expresses it: "During the 31st of March, *my cavalry had been driven back from Five Forks* to within a short distance of Dinwiddie Court House. . . ."

know how difficult is the task for human nature to acknowledge magnanimity in one it has injured and aspersed, but could General Sheridan have grasped the opportunity here offered to his hand, beyond all question he would have shown far higher generalship than that ascribed to him by General Grant when, confronted by General Pickett in a broken and wooded country, "he deployed his cavalry on foot, leaving only mounted men enough to take charge of the horses."

General Sheridan quotes in full his well known despatch to General Warren, dated April 1, 1865, 3 a. m. The first thing to be noted in connection with this despatch is that it is *an order* addressed to a corps commander who was moving under the personal command of Major-General Meade. This was acknowledged by General Sheridan before the court of inquiry, (Record pp. 71, 80.), and one cannot but contrast this last reproduction of the order with his statements in regard to the command of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac on, and just prior to, May 8, 1864.

The next point to be noted is that the despatch was dated "3 a. m.", and that it was received by General Warren at 4.50 a. m., as admitted (Record. p. 200) by the officer who carried the order for General Sheridan. General Sheridan says that he "never once doubted that measures would be taken to comply with" his despatch, when the record shows that *it was neither delivered nor written in time to make compliance possible*. In connection with this, General Meade's despatch to General Grant dated April 1, 6 a. m., is of interest. It commences: "The officer sent to Sheridan returned *between 2 and 3 a. m.* without any written communication, but giving

General Sheridan's opinion that the enemy were retreating from his front. . ." This was substantially acknowledged by General Sheridan (Record. p. 79) and shows that, as a matter of fact, he concurred in the opinion expressed in General Warren's despatch of 8.20 p. m. just quoted.

General Sheridan states: "As a matter of fact, when Pickett was passing the all-important point Warren's men were just breaking from the bivouac in which their chief had placed them the night before, . . ." The record—printed daily with special reference to General Sheridan's convenience and benefit—shows that General Pickett's troops *began to retire soon after midnight* (Record. pp. 421, 485, 497, 511, et al.) in consequence of General Bartlett's movement upon their left and rear, and that, with the exception of the rear guard, *they were in their lines at Five Forks soon after sunrise on April 1.*

General Sheridan says: "By 2 o'clock in the afternoon Merritt had forced the enemy inside his intrenchments." The record shows that the Confederate infantry lines were formed about Five Forks *before 9 a. m.*, and that they were practically unmolested in their work of strengthening their lines *until the attack at 4 o'clock p. m.* General Sheridan has offered no explanation of the fact that, *by his order*, (Record p. 21) 12,000 infantry halted *for six hours*, five miles in time, and two and one half miles in distance, to the rear, and allowed this work to proceed. That six hours halt was certainly not General Warren's blunder.

The imputation of unnecessary delay in the movement of the Fifth Corps, when at last it was ordered to the front, is repeated by General Sheridan.

It is enough here to quote the words of General Warren's counsel, Mr. Stickney:—

On this point a charge against Warren is a charge against the chief officers of his corps. . . . The commanders of Warren's divisions and brigades were men who had been well tried. They were men who could be safely trusted to bring their commands up for that attack.

The finding of the court confirms the statement.

General Sheridan states (Vol. 2. p. 162) that, though he did not know how far toward Hatcher's Run the refused left of the enemy's works extended, he "did know where the refusal began," and that this "return" was the point he wished to assail. It was in evidence before the court of inquiry, and acknowledged by General Sheridan (Record. pp. 96, 97, 99, 115), that he instructed General Warren, when forming his troops for assault, that the "return" was *in the near vicinity of the intersection of the Gravelly Run Church Road and the White Oak Road*. Developments proved, however, that the "return" was *between seven and eight hundred yards west of that intersection*, and General Ayres (Record. pp. 257, 266, 270) testifies in the most precise manner that, after his change of direction to meet the fire from the "return", General Sheridan came to him "some three times at short intervals and expressed the same fear, that he [I] had changed his [my] front *too soon*, and was *engaging the cavalry instead of the enemy*; that he [I] had changed it before he [I] got sufficiently far north."

Continuing his account (p. 163), General Sheridan states that the deflection of General Crawford's division "which finally brought it out on the Ford Road near C. Young's house, *frustrated the purpose he [I] had in mind when ordering the attack.*" On the preceding page he states:—

I therefore intended that Ayres and Crawford should attack *the refused trenches squarely*, and when these two divisions and Merritt's cavalry became hotly engaged, Griffin's division *was to pass around the left of the Confederate line; and I personally instructed Griffin how I wished him to go in, . . .*

It is difficult to understand how General Sheridan's purpose was "frustrated" when, as a result of the erroneous information given by General Sheridan concerning the location of the "return", the division of General Griffin was moved by General Warren's order from its place in reserve to the right of General Ayres's division, and General Warren, then overtaking the diverging division of General Crawford, *performed with it the very movement General Sheridan has put such stress upon.* It is unnecessary to comment upon General Sheridan's issuing instructions to a division commander of the Fifth Corps when the corps commander was present and actively engaged in his duties, further than to again recall how bitterly he himself resented the fact that his commanding officer, General Meade, issued orders to two divisions of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac *when the commander of that corps was absent from duty on the night of May 7, 1864.*

General Sheridan has seen fit again to arraign General Warren's manner. As to that manner while forming his troops for the assault, it is enough to refer to the testimony of General Joshua L. Chamberlain (Record. p. 236) who knew General Warren long and well, and who states that at Gravelly Run Church he held the manner of a man intensely occupied but energetic. As to his manner in the battle, it is sufficient to quote the words of his counsel (Record. pp. 1398-9) as addressed to the court that had before it the full testimony in the case, and that sustained the counsel by its verdict. Says Mr. Stickney:—

At one time on that field a question was asked, "Where is Warren?" Where was he not? is a question which might be asked and to which no answer can be given. At every point of the battle field, at the precise place where he could be of service, at the precise time when he could be of service, by some strange chance he was at hand. Was it a chance? Or is it the fact that one man on that field had a keen eye to seize a situation, and a keen mind to devise the measures to meet it? Although many of the witnesses here testify that they did not see their own division commanders at any time during the entire day, yet so it is that nearly every single man of them saw Warren. His own evidence as to his movements on that field can be thrown out of this case, except that it is a string on which to connect the events given us by other witnesses; and we could get his movements from the stories of other witnesses. At every point his testimony is confirmed by other witnesses, if it needed confirmation.

This statement of the case is also supported by the argument of Major Gardner, counsel for General Sheridan, who (Record. p. 1538) attempts *to make General Warren's undeniable activity the basis of a charge of "great indecision in his movements."*

In view of the persistent arraignment of General Warren in this particular, some consideration of General Sheridan's manner and method, as established before the court of inquiry, is certainly admissible. In his evidence (Record. p. 94) we find the following:—

Q. I will ask you the question: Had you at that time any prejudice against General Warren?—A. No, sir.

Q. His reputation was that of an efficient officer, was it not?—A. *I don't know what his reputation was; I had not served with him especially.*

In the testimony of General Chamberlain (Record. p. 234) we find a strange commentary on this:—

Q. Were you at the head of the column?—A. I was.

Q. About what hour in the morning was it when you met General Sheridan?—A. I think it was seven o'clock.

Q. What was the conversation?—A. . . . General Sheridan asked me where General Warren was. I told him I understood him to be at the rear of the column with the rear division.

Q. Give the whole conversation, the words, as accurately as you can?—A. The general made a reply which showed that he was annoyed.

Q. I want the words?—A. He said, "*That is where I should expect him to be*", or words to that effect.

For sake of brevity we quote again the words of Mr. Stickney (Record. pp. 1404-6) addressed to the court. Says Mr. Stickney:—

Now, the most singular feature of this whole case, the most remarkable point in it, is the fact that a witness comes here and says: "Although I was in command of the United States forces in the field on that day, I saw only the attack of General Ayres on that earthwork at the end; I know nothing of Griffin's movements; I know nothing of Crawford's movements; I do not know that Crawford became engaged with Munford, or that he had any fighting at any point in the woods; *I do not know any thing of what the commander of the Fifth Corps did during the operations of that day; and I cannot give*"—for those are his words—"I cannot give any account of my own personal movements after Ayres's assault. Yet I have had the glory of that day for sixteen years. And I still claim it!"

After reference to pages 120-128 of the Record, in substantiation, he continues:—

If ever a soldier in military history has taken such a position before, it is beyond my knowledge. If any enemy of General Sheridan should tell such a story against him no one would credit it; but *it is the statement of the man himself as to his own movements, made before a military court.* And there we must leave him.

We find further, in General Sheridan's testimony (Record. pp. 100-1):—

Q. And what do you claim was Warren's sin of omission or commission in relation to that going off to the right?—A. If there was anybody in the wide world that should have made an effort to prevent that, General Warren was the man.

Q. Undoubtedly. Now do you know whether he made any effort or not?—A. I don't know. I did not realize any.

Q. Did you ask him what he had done?—A. I could not find him.

Q. Did you ask him afterwards when you did find him?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you ask any one at the time you relieved him?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you try to get any information of any one at the time you relieved him?—A. No, sir; I had all I wanted.

Turning now to page 366 of the Record, we find the testimony of General Fred. T. Locke, Assistant Adjutant-General Fifth Army Corps, as to his interview with General Sheridan on the White Oak Road near Five Forks, *while General Warren was pushing forward with his troops toward the Gilliam field and to the assault of the last lines attempted to be held by the enemy:—*

Q. Did you report to General Sheridan?—A. I gave him the message which General Warren had directed me to give him.

Q. Give your words as nearly as you can.—A. That we had gained the enemy's rear, and had taken over 1,500 prisoners, and that he was pushing in a division as rapidly as he could.

Q. Give Sheridan's answer.—A. General Sheridan turned around on his horse, he raised his right hand in this manner, and says: "*Tell General Warren, by G—! I say he was not at the front. That is all I have got to say to him.*"

Q. Did he give you any orders or instructions for General Warren?—A. Not a word.

Q. What was his manner?—A. *Very excited.*

General Locke wrote in his note book the words of General Sheridan's reply to General Warren's message, and confirmed his memorandum by reference to Captain Melcher who was present at the interview. Further comment on General Sheridan's manner would seem to be unnecessary.

One other point, however, should be briefly noted in the words of Mr. Stickney:—

General Sheridan's statement is that this resolution to relieve General Warren was taken by him after the battle was over [Memoirs. Vol. 2, p. 165], in view of the new conditions that arose at the end of the engagement. We have the testimony of Colonel Brinton [Record. p. 303] to the effect that, in the Sydnor field, *when the action was not more than one hour in progress*, General Sheridan met General Griffin; that he shouted out the

question, "Where is Warren?" Without waiting for an answer, he turned to General Griffin and said, "*General Griffin, I put you in command of the Fifth corps.*" That is confirmed by General Chamberlain's testimony [Record. pp. 277-8] in the most explicit manner.

It is also supported by General Griffin's official report of April 29, 1865.

Space allows but little further reference to General Sheridan's Memoirs. He says:—

Years after the war, in 1879, a Court of Inquiry was given General Warren in relation to his conduct on the day of the battle. . . . Briefly stated, in my report of the battle of Five Forks there were four imputations concerning General Warren. The first implied that Warren failed to reach me on the 1st of April, when I had reason to expect him; the second, that the tactical handling of his corps was unskillful; the third, that he did not exert himself to get his corps up to Gravelly Run Church; and the fourth, that when portions of his line gave way he did not exert himself to restore confidence to his troops. The court found against him on the first and second counts, and for him on the third and fourth.

He concludes his remarks with the assertion that his course with regard to General Warren is plainly justifiable in the view of all who are disposed to be fair-minded, and quotes from General Sherman's review of the Proceedings of the Warren Court, words with which he is convinced the judgment of history will accord.

This conclusion calls for a reference, as brief as possible, to General Warren's repeated applications for redress, and the results that followed.

On page 170 of Benét's Military Law and Courts-martial, we find:—

The articles of war contain full authority for protecting the rights and interests of inferiors, by giving to all officers and soldiers the right of appeal, and requiring superiors, in positive and unequivocal terms, to follow certain prescribed modes for the doing justice to the appellant.

And again on page 176:—

This is the only case—the redressing of wrongs—in which an appeal can be made to a higher tribunal, under the articles of war; thus exhibiting special jealousy for the rights of inferior officers and soldiers, by making in their favor a marked exception to the ordinary course of military trials.

Following the letter of the law, the aggrieved party must first make due application for redress to his commanding officer. General Warren received the order of General Sheridan relieving him from the command of the Fifth Army Corps and directing him to report to General Grant, at 7 p. m. April 1, 1865. Before leaving the field, General Warren made personal application to General Sheridan for a reconsideration of the order. On the testimony of General Sheridan's own aide (Record p. 1058) that officer's answer was: "*Reconsider? H—! I don't reconsider my determination.*" This, of course, relieved General Warren from the necessity of further reference to General Sheridan. On April 9, 1865, however, he appealed (Record. pp. 13-17) to General Grant for a court of inquiry. General Grant replied: "It is impossible at this time to give the court and witnesses necessary for the investigation." Early in 1866, General Warren again urged the matter upon General Grant's attention, through the personal efforts of Senator E. D. Morgan. General Grant again declined "*on account of expenses of court, witnesses etc.*" On May 1, 1866, General Warren made application to the President of the United States, but without result, although Mr. Stanton at first promised that the request should be granted. Because of his positive decision upon the applications already made, no further effort was put forth during the presidency of General Grant, but on November 18, 1879, General Warren again urged his suit through the Hon. Geo. W. McCrary, Secre-

tary of War. This application was endorsed as follows :—

Headquarters of the Army,
Washington, D. C., Dec. 2, 1879.

The Hon. Secretary of War having asked my opinion of the enclosed appeal, I must say that the long-endured imputations on the fair fame of General Warren warrants the court of inquiry he has repeatedly asked for, and which has thus far been denied him.

W. T. Sherman,
General.

On December 9, 1879, the order convening the court was issued by the Adjutant-General.

The opinions of that court, as finally laid before the President of the United States, are as follows :—

REPORT.

The First Imputation is found in an extract from General Grant's report, on page 1137 of the report of the Honorable Secretary of War to the first session of the Thirty-ninth Congress, as follows (see, also, Record. p. 48) :

"On the morning of the 31st, General Warren reported favorably to getting possession of the White Oak Road, and was directed to do so. To accomplish this, he moved with one division instead of his whole corps, which was attacked by the enemy in superior force and driven back on the second division before it had time to form, and it in turn forced back upon the third division, when the enemy was checked. A division of the Second Corps was immediately sent to his support, the enemy driven back with heavy loss, and possession of the White Oak Road gained."

OPINION.

There seems to be *no evidence that General Warren, on the morning of March 31, or at any other time, reported favorably to getting possession of the White Oak Road* except in his despatch (V) of 4 p. m., March 30, already referred to, and the movement suggested in that was practically set aside by General Grant's despatch (VIII) of March 30, heretofore quoted. General Warren's report, in his despatch (LXXXIV) of 9:40 a. m., March 31, quoted above, that he had given orders to drive the enemy's pickets off the White Oak Road or develop what force of the enemy held it, could not be fairly construed as being able to take possession of it.

With regard to that portion of the imputation contained in the statement that General Warren *was directed to take possession* of the White Oak Road, the following despatch from General Meade is the only one that can bear that construction:

"LXXXV.

"U. S. M. T.

"Nunan.

Hdqrs. Armies U. S.

"10:30 a. m., Mar. 31, 1865.

"To Maj. Gen. G. K. Warren:

"Your despatch giving Ayres's position is received. Gen'l. Meade directs that *should you determine by your reconnoissance* that you can get possession of and hold the White Oak Road, you are to do so, notwithstanding the orders to suspend operations to-day.

"Alex. S. Webb

"Bv't. M. G., C. of S."

And the evidence before the court shows that this order was not received by General Warren till *after* the fighting that resulted from the attempted reconnoissance had begun.

It is in evidence by Ayres's and Crawford's testimony that General Warren had in his advance *two divisions*, though the testimony does not clearly show how long before the attack of the enemy upon Ayres the division of Crawford reached him.

Griffin's division was held *in reserve* along the branch of Gravelly Run nearest to and northwest from the Boydton Plank Road, and *it may have been so held to carry out the intentions of the following despatch from General Meade's headquarters:*

"LXXIX.

"Nunan. 8.32 a. m.

U. S. M. T.

"Hdqrs. A. of P., 8.25, Mar. 31, 1865.

"To Maj. Gen. Warren:

"There is firing along Humphreys's front. The Maj. Gen'l com'd'g desires you be ready to send your reserve, if it should be called for, to support Humphreys.

"There will be no movement of troops to-day.

"A. S. Webb,

"Rec. 8.40 a. m.—G. K. W."

"B. M. G."

The court is further of the opinion that, considering the Fifth Corps constituted the extreme left wing of the armies operating against Richmond, and that the corps was in a delicate position and liable to be attacked at any moment, of which liability General Warren had been repeatedly warned, he should have been with his advanced divisions, guiding and directing them, and that he should have started earlier to the front than he did and not have waited at the telegraph office to keep in communication with General Meade's headquarters, unless he had direct orders that

morning so do to, which, however, does not appear in the evidence.

SECOND IMPUTATION.

The Second Imputation is found in the following extract from General Sheridan's report of May 15, 1865 (See Record. pp. 21 and 48), as follows:

" had General Warren moved according to the expectations of the Lieutenant-General, there would appear to have been but little chance for the escape of the enemy's infantry in front of the Dinwiddie Court House."

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OPINION.

It is supposed that "the expectations of the lieutenant-general," referred to in this imputation, are those expressed in his despatch to General Sheridan of 10.45 p. m. of March 31, 1865, as follows:

"CLXXIX.

"Dabney's Mills,

"March 31, 1865—10.45 p. m.

"Major-General Sheridan:

"The 5th Corps has been ordered to your support. Two divisions will go by J. Boisseau's and one down the Boydton Road. In addition to this I have sent Mackenzie's cavalry, which will reach you by the Vaughan Road. All these forces, except the cavalry, should reach you by 12 to-night.

You will assume command of the whole force sent to operate with you and use it to the best of your ability to destroy the force which your command has fought so gallantly to-day.

"U. S. Grant,

"Lieutenant-General."

In which he says, "All these forces, except the cavalry, should reach you by 12 to-night." If this supposition be correct, the court is of opinion, considering the condition of the roads and surrounding country over part of which the troops had to march, the darkness of the night, the distance to be traveled, and the hour at which the order for the march reached General Warren, 10.50 p. m., that *it was not practicable for the Fifth Corps to have reached General Sheridan at 12 o'clock on the night of March 31.*

Notwithstanding that dispositions suitable for the contingency of Sheridan's falling back from Dinwiddie might well have occupied and perplexed General Warren's mind during the night, the court is of the opinion that he should have moved the two divisions by the Crump Road in obedience to the orders *and expectations of his commander*, upon whom alone rested the responsibility of the consequences.

It appears from the despatches and General Warren's testimony, that neither Generals Meade, Sheridan, or Warren expressed an intention of having this column attack before daylight.

The court is further of the opinion that General Warren should have started with two divisions, as directed by General Meade's despatch (CIV, heretofore quoted), as early after its receipt, at 10,50 p. m., as he could be assured of the prospect of Ayres's departure down the Boydton Plank Road, and should have advanced on the Crump Road as far as directed in that despatch, or as far as might be practicable or necessary to fulfill *General Meade's intention*; whereas the evidence shows that he did not start until between five and six o'clock on the morning of the 1st of April, and did not reach J. Boisseau's with the head of the column until about seven o'clock in the morning.

The despatches show that Generals Meade and Warren *anticipated a withdrawal during the night of the enemy's forces fronting General Sheridan*, which was rendered highly probable from the known position in their rear of a portion of the Fifth Corps (Bartlett's Brigade) at G. Boisseau's, *and the event justified the anticipation.*

THIRD IMPUTATION.

The Third Imputation is found in an extract from General Sheridan's report of May 16, 1865 (see Record. pages 21 and 48), as follows :

" . . . General Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done, and his manner gave me the impression that he wished the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed."

On the afternoon of April 1, the Fifth Corps was massed as follows: Crawford's and Griffin's divisions at the forks of the Crump Road and the main road from Dinwiddie Court House to Five Forks, and Ayres's division on the Brooke's Road about one-fourth of a mile east from the forks of that road and the road to Five Forks.

The distance from the position of Griffin and Crawford to the place of formation of the Fifth Corps, near Gravelly Run Church, was about $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and the length of the corps when spread out in column of route would be about $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles. The last file of the column required as much time to reach the place of formation as it would have taken to march about 5 miles.

General Warren received his orders near Gravelly Run Church to move up his corps at 1 p. m., and it took some time to communicate those orders to the divisions and for the movement to begin.

The route to the place of formation was along a narrow

road, very muddy and slippery, somewhat encumbered with wagons and led horses of the cavalry corps, and the men were fatigued. The testimony of brigade and division commanders is to the effect that the corps in line of march was well closed up, and that no unnecessary delay was incurred.

The corps reached its destination, and was formed ready to advance against the enemy about 4 p. m.

It is in evidence that General Warren remained near Gravelly Run Church, directing the formation, explaining the mode of attack to the division and brigade commanders, with sketches prepared for the purpose.

General Warren also repeatedly sent out staff officers to the division commanders in order to expedite the march.

OPINION.

The court is of the opinion that *there was no unnecessary delay in this march of the Fifth Corps*, and that General Warren took the usual methods of a corps commander to prevent delay.

The question regarding General Warren's manner appears to be too intangible and the evidence on it too contradictory for the court to decide, separate from the context, that he appeared to wish "the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack would be completed;" *but his actions, as shown by the evidence, do not appear to have corresponded with such wish, if ever he entertained it.*

FOURTH IMPUTATION.

The Fourth Imputation is found in an extract from General Sheridan's report of May 16, 1865 (see Record, pp. 22 and 48), as follows:

"During this attack I again became dissatisfied with General Warren. During the engagement portions of his line gave way when not exposed to a heavy fire, and simply from want of confidence on the part of the troops, which General Warren did not exert himself to inspire."

When the Fifth Corps moved up to the attack, General Sheridan said to General Ayres, "I will ride with you." General Warren was on the left of Crawford's division, between Crawford and Ayres.

When General Ayres's command struck the White Oak Road it received a fire in flank from the enemy's "return" nearly at right angles to the road. He changed front immediately at right angles and faced the "return," his right receiving a fire from Mun-

ford's Confederate division of dismounted cavalry distributed along the edge of the woods to the north of the White Oak Road. There was some confusion, which was immediately checked by the exertions of General Sheridan, General Ayres, and other officers.

The evidence shows that General Warren was observant of Ayres, because he sent orders to Winthrop's reserve brigade to form on the left of Ayres's new line.

This necessary change of front of Ayres increased the interval between him and Crawford on his right; the latter was marching without change of direction until, as he expressed it, he would clear the right of Ayres, when he was also to change front to the left.

At this moment, Warren, who saw that Crawford, with Griffin following, was disappearing in the woods to the north of the White Oak Road, sent a staff officer to Griffin to come as quickly as he could to sustain Ayres; went himself to the left brigade of Crawford, and caused a line to be marked out facing to the west, directing the brigade commander to form on it; then went into the woods and gave orders to the right brigade of Crawford to form on the same line. When he returned to the open ground the brigade he had directed to change front had disappeared, as appears by the evidence, *in consequence of orders given by an officer of General Sheridan's staff*. General Warren sent repeated orders by staff-officers to both Griffin and Crawford to change direction, and *went himself to both*, and finally by these means corrected, as far as was possible under the circumstances, the divergence of these two divisions.

It appears from evidence that these two divisions were operating in the woods and over a difficult country, and received a fire in their front from the dismounted cavalry of Munford, posted in the woods to the north of the White Oak Road, which led to the belief for some time, that the enemy had a line of battle in front; and this may furnish one reason why it was so difficult at first to change their direction to the proper one.

OPINION.

General Warren's attention appears to have been drawn, almost immediately after Ayres received the flank fire from the "return" and his consequent change of front, to the probability of Crawford with Griffin diverging too much from and being separated from Ayres, and *by continuous exertions of himself and staff substantially remedied matters*; and the court thinks that this was *for him the essential point to be attended to, which also exacted his whole efforts to accomplish*.

When the delicacy of the position in which the court—consisting of but two members, who must concur—was placed by the necessity of expressing judicial opinions upon the statements of Generals Grant and Sheridan, is taken into consideration, nothing can be more explicit than those opinions as here given. It would be impossible to pronounce against the allegations of those officers in clearer or more courteous language. Concerning the criticisms of General Warren's personal movements on March 31, and the movements of his divisions on the early morning of April 1, it is manifest from the opinions as expressed, and from details given in the reports, that the court, conscious that the death of General Meade had deprived General Warren of a most material witness, and fully recognizing the embarrassments under which he had been called to act, simply differed from General Warren in the conclusions he arrived at, and acted upon, in the discharge of his duty as corps commander during the absence of his superior from the front and that superior's consequent lack of full information as to the developing details of the field. General Humphreys (Va. Campaign. p. 341) has said :—

But General Warren should have moved with Griffin and Crawford *as soon as practicable* after receiving Meade's order at 10.50 p. m., *though it will be observed that subsequent to that hour General Meade subordinated all General Warren's efforts to ensuring the presence of one of his divisions with General Sheridan by daylight.*

There is, in neither case, any imputation cast upon General Warren's motives, efforts, or intelligence, but simply a difference of opinion as to practicability and the necessities of the case. It is manifest that, while the death of General Meade rendered it impossible for General Warren to present *direct*

and *positive* evidence¹ that his actions upon March 31, and the night following, had been such as to satisfy the intentions and requirements of his superior and commanding officer, the facts, as established to the satisfaction of, and as stated by the court, and as indicated by General Humphreys, all strongly support that hypothesis against which no evidence stronger than mere speculation has been produced, and General Alex. S. Webb, the last Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac—a witness of unquestionable competence and, on this point, second in authority only to General Meade himself—states positively to the writer: “I believe General Meade *was satisfied* with General Warren’s movements March 31, to April 1. We who knew Warren felt that he would do his best to relieve Sheridan.”

The record of the proceedings of the court was submitted to the Honorable Robert T. Lincoln, Secretary of War, accompanied by a report from Brigadier-General D. G. Swaim, Judge-Advocate General, U. S. Army, under date of July 11, 1882. That report is notoriously something far other than a legiti-

1. General Meade’s despatch to General Grant dated 6 a. m., April 1, 1865 (Record. p. 1254), concludes with the words, “Warren will be at or near Dinwiddie soon, with his whole corps, and will require further orders.” The following despatch (Record. p. 1288) was received by General Warren *about 9 a. m.* April 1:

“Headquarters Army of the Potomac.

“April 1, 6 a. m., 1864.

“Maj. Gen. Warren :

“Gen’l Meade directs that in the movements *following your junction* with Gen’l Sheridan you will be under his orders, and will report to him. Please send a report of progress.

“Alex. S. Webb,

“B. M. G., C. O. S.”

In the absence of *evidence* to the contrary, these despatches certainly indicate that General Warren — *held under direct orders from General Meade up to 6 a. m. April 1* — had met the intentions and expectations of his commanding officer, and had even exceeded, or anticipated, them when his whole corps had joined and reported to General Sheridan before 7 a. m. — two hours before the receipt of the 6 a. m. order sent by General Webb.

mate and legal review of the proceedings of the court. It is, in fact, *an arbitrary re-trial* of the case by the Judge-Advocate General in which General D. G. Swaim assumes to set aside and modify the findings and opinions of Generals C. C. Augur and John Newton.

This brings us to the report of General Sherman, so confidently referred to by General Sheridan. After reciting a brief history of the case as it seems to appear to him, General Sherman states that General Sheridan's action in relieving General Warren was sustained by General Grant and never questioned by either President Lincoln or President Johnson and that, "*There the matter ought to have ended.*"

General Sherman, however, could not but be aware that the action of Generals Grant and Sheridan *has never yet received the presidential approval which alone could make it defensible and legal*, and he neglects to state *how it came that the matter was not brought to the attention of Presidents Lincoln or Johnson*; and, further, the Articles of War, and *his own endorsement upon General Warren's last, and successful, application for a court*, do not sustain the reconsidered opinion he here expresses — *on the report of the court becoming known*. General Sherman states that the findings of the court "confirm substantially what was officially reported on the dates of the occurrences," but this, and his preceding detailed statements to the same effect, are clearly denied by the court itself.

General Sherman affirms "the patriotism, integrity, and great intelligence of General Warren," as "attested by a long record of most excellent service," but, with warning of dire results in future wars if General Sheridan is not "fully and entirely sustain-

ed," he endorses General Sheridan in a course that can be justified only on the assumption that General Warren was lacking in every trait conceded and, also, was what General Sheridan's counsel essayed to prove him—a scheming coward.

General Sherman says:—

It would be *an unsafe and dangerous rule* to hold the commander of an army in battle to a technical adherence *to any rule of conduct* for managing his command. He is responsible for results and holds the lives and *reputations* of every officer and soldier under his orders as subordinate to the great end—victory.

To understand that neither General Grant, nor General Sherman, nor General Sheridan believed this monstrous theory, one has but to recall their own words concerning Shiloh, Corinth, Raleigh and Todd's Tavern. The roar of battle absolves no officer, from the commander-in-chief down, from obedience to the Constitution and to the Articles of War; nor does it release him from the obligations of honor and justice in his own person; still less does it place the reputation of any subordinate at his disposal, and to persist in wrong under such a plea is base. If the able argument made by General Warren's counsel before the court of inquiry needed support, or confirmation, where could they be better found than in this quaint appeal unto Cæsarism,—this plea in confession and avoidance—upon which General Sheridan has rested his case?

The final endorsement upon the proceedings of the court of inquiry is as follows:—

War Department,

November 21, 1882.

The foregoing proceedings and report having been laid before the President, he directs that the findings and opinions of the court of inquiry be published.

Robert T. Lincoln,
Secretary of War.

In professed compliance with that endorsement, a limited number of copies of the full proceedings and report of the court were printed and *to a very limited extent* were distributed. *At the same time, however, a pamphlet containing the report and opinion of the court, together with the reports of the Judge-Advocate General and the General of the Army, was largely printed and widely distributed.* And yet, we are told that military law and military courts are established for the purpose of "*arriving at the truth, that there may not in any case, be a failure of justice*" !

FIVE FORKS

TO

APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE.

General Grant (Mem. Vol. 2. p. 216) describes General Warren as "*a gallant soldier, an able man ; and he was besides thoroughly imbued with the solemnity and importance of the duty he had to perform*". Afterwards, referring (p. 445) to the removal of General Warren from the command of the Fifth Army Corps, he says :—

"I was so much dissatisfied with Warren's dilatory movements in the battle of White Oak Road and in his failure to reach Sheridan in time, that I was very much afraid that at the last moment he would fail Sheridan. *He was a man of fine intelligence, great earnestness, quick perception, and could make his dispositions as quickly as any officer, under difficulties where he was forced to act.* But I had before discovered a defect which was beyond his control, that was very prejudicial to his usefulness in emergencies like the one just before us. He could see every danger at a glance before he had encountered it. He would not only make preparations to meet the danger which might occur, but he would inform his commanding officer what others should do while he was executing his move.

I had sent a staff officer to General Sheridan to call his attention to these defects, and to say that as much as I liked General Warren, now was not a time when we could let our personal feelings for any one stand in the way of success ; and if his removal was necessary to success, not to hesitate. It was upon that au-

thorization that Sheridan removed Warren. I was very sorry that it had been done, and regretted still more that I had not long before taken occasion to assign him to another field of duty.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon General Grant's expression of regret that he had not sooner removed General Warren from the field where he had won his corps command, or to call attention to his sorrow over the adoption of his own suggestion. It is worthy of notice, however, that, *when testifying under oath* before the Warren Court of Inquiry, General Grant stated positively (Record. pp. 1028-1034) *that his reasons for sending the authorization for removal to General Sheridan did not have reference to General Warren's conduct on March 31, or April 1, 1865, but "to previous conduct."* While the sworn evidence thus emphatically denies the correctness of the later statement as to that point, it is evident that all recollection of the witness-stand had not escaped the writer of the Memoirs, for in his testimony we find (Record p. 1041) the interjected implication:

But where officers undertook to think for themselves, and considered that the officer giving them orders had not fully considered what everybody else was to do, it generally led to failure or delay.

In consideration of the opinions expressed by the court of inquiry upon the allegations made against General Warren by Generals Grant and Sheridan; and in view of the facts, well established by the record of that court, that General Warren not only saw the dangers encountered by his command on March 31, and April 1, 1865, but successfully met and overcame them, and, in addition, of his own soldierly volition made such dispositions as materially aided *General Sheridan* to maintain himself under the reverse he encountered upon March 31,—the record of General Warren may safely be left to maintain

his honor and ability against indefinite insinuations as "to previous conduct." Had that record not been practically unassailable, General Warren could not have maintained the command he held from May 4, 1864, to April 1, 1865. To this the Military History and Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant bear witness, and the time and method of his removal from that command emphasize the involuntary testimony.

Constituted, as it was, solely for the consideration of *General Warren's* conduct, the investigation of the Warren Court of Inquiry was made upon the assumption, repeatedly stated and assented to by counsel for General Warren, that the appropriateness of the action of Generals Grant and Sheridan, and the sufficiency of their authority, were not to be questioned. That, as a matter of absolute fact, the assumption was at least debatable, is very clearly indicated by General Sherman's report and pleading upon the proceedings of the court. That the course pursued by the Lieutenant-General and the commander of the Army of the Shenandoah "does not occur frequently," is acknowledged by the evidence (Record. p. 93) of General Sheridan.

The army exists by authority of the Constitution of the United States. Under that authority, the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints and commissions all commissioned officers of the army. The resignation of officers appointed by the President can be accepted by him alone, and, except in time of war, no officer can be dismissed from the army except by sentence of court-martial approved by the President; and without his approval no sentence of a court-martial which affects a general officer is effective in time of

either peace or war. The transfer of officers from one regiment or corps to another can be made only by authority of *the President*, and “if, upon marches, guards, or in quarters, different corps of the same army shall happen to join, or do duty together, the officer highest in rank . . . there on duty or in quarters, shall command the whole, . . . unless otherwise specially directed by *the President of the United States*, according to the nature of the case.” These powers, *conferred by the Constitution upon the President alone*, relate to the course of ordinary military proceedings. For special reasons and peculiar emergencies, still greater powers are entrusted to him—and to him alone. By Act of Congress, July 17, 1862, *the President of the United States* was “authorized and requested to dismiss and discharge from military service either in the army, navy, marine corps, or volunteer force, in the United States service, any officer for any cause which, in his judgment, either renders such officer unsuitable for, or whose dismissal would promote, the public service,” and in any time of war, *to him alone*, as Commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, belongs the right and duty of assigning commanders to Army Corps, or Armies, in the field, and of removing them for cause sufficient in his judgment; *but neither the Constitution of the United States, nor the Articles of War, contain any authority for the delegation of any of these powers especially entrusted to the President to any other officer of the government.* That there are grave reasons why such power should be thus limited and guarded, scarce needs an argument. Commenting upon the subject of dismissals from the service “by order of the President,” an undoubted authority (Benét. Military Law and Courts-martial) says:—

Much might be said on the ground of expediency, in opposition to the rule and practice in this regard, but we will only remark, that the power of the President to remove officers from the army at his pleasure, might some day prove of greater danger to the liberties of the people, than the simple fact of keeping up a standing army. The right of appointing to office during the recess of the Senate, said appointments to hold until the end of the next session of Congress, gives to an unscrupulous executive a fearful power. The selection of political tools, to hold such positions for many months, would suffice, under circumstances of great extremity, to work out direst evils to the republic. Such a power over an army cannot be too well guarded by all the checks which an enlightened judgment can impose, and as an evil, is more to be dreaded than the perpetual tenure of officers' commissions, subject as they are to the close supervision of military tribunals.

To exercise by proxy the powers entrusted solely to the President, would extend, rather than guard against, the evil indicated, and concerning a delegated authority to remove regularly assigned commanders in the field, another high authority condenses the same reasoning into:—

Given a general-in-chief—say Arnold who turned traitor—he can remove every corps or division commander, replace them with tools, and make treason a success.

General Warren had for years honored a commission in the army. Not even his traducers have denied that his service—in peace and war—as subordinate or when in high command—was pre-eminently distinguished by zeal, fidelity, thoroughness, and intelligence that neither fear nor favor could swerve from the line of truth and duty. In addition, history will record that the facts established by sworn testimony before the court of inquiry, sustain the statement that his only error as commander of the Fifth Army Corps at Five Forks lay *in obeying General Sheridan's order relieving him from his command*, and that even that error is not only palliated by the participation of his comrades, but heightens his renown—for it illustrates the devoted subordination

so characteristic of the Army of the Potomac, which will stand forever in refutation of puerile charges of jealousy.

The following order is still on the files of the War Department, and unrevoked:—

Order }
No. 54. }

Adjutant-General's Office,
Washington, 13th August, 1829.

The subjoined Regulation, approved by the President of the United States, has been received from the War Department, and is published for the information and government of all concerned.

“REGULATION CONCERNING RANK AND COMMAND.

“6. An officer entrusted with the command of a post, detachment, guard, or separate command, *will not surrender it to another, unless regularly relieved from the duty assigned him*, except in case of sickness or inability to perform his duty, when the officer next in rank, present and on duty with such command, will succeed as a matter of course.

“By command of the President:

“John F. Eaton,

“Secretary of War.

“By Order of Alexander Macomb,

“Major-General Commanding the Army:

“Adjutant General.”

This order appears as paragraph 15 of General Regulations of 1841, and was repeated in General Order No. 5, March 12, 1846. It does not appear in set terms, however, in the succeeding Army Regulations, probably because it announces an axiomatic principle underlying the whole military system—that no one can resign a trust confided to him unless regularly relieved by competent authority. General Warren, therefore, should have demanded to see in writing the authority under which General Sheridan assumed to act, and competent authority not being thus presented, he, *in loyal subordination to the su-*

perior from whom he derived his own authority and had received his trust, should have declined to surrender his command. The command of an army, or army corps, is no ordinary charge. Commanders assigned to such positions by the President, or sovereign power, are presumed to possess additional qualities over and above the mere acquirement of technicalities, or simple personal gallantry, and only the power conferring can relieve from the grave responsibilities of such a trust. *Possibly, to meet great emergencies*, the President might grant *to a general-in-chief*, the right to remove or replace a corps commander, *subject to report without delay for his confirmation or disapproval*, but there can be no authority, or right, involved to delegate the power still further,—least of all, to one holding equal rank as corps commander, and by verbal authorization so vague and general that neither the author nor the recipient (Record. pp. 55, 93, 901, 1028) retain a definite recollection of the form.

It would seem, therefore, that General Sherman's plea for relief from the restraints of "any rule of conduct" was somewhat urgently needed in the attempt to sustain *the assumption of presidential authority* shown by the removal of General Warren and the assignment of General Griffin to the corps command over General Crawford, a senior division commander present and on duty with the corps. The supposition that any emergency called for such an exercise of illegal power cannot be maintained. Legitimate means were available, and ample for all necessities. If General Sheridan was satisfied that General Warren had in any way failed in his duty on April 1, 1865, he had it rightfully in his power, as commanding officer, to order General Warren to re-

port in arrest to his army commander, General Meade. *In that event, however, General Warren could not have been denied an immediate hearing before a tribunal of his peers.*

It is scarcely necessary to comment on the gratuitous discourtesy to the commander of the Army of the Potomac, involved in the method adopted.

General Grant has gravely recorded that General Warren's intelligence, activity, and prevision, in connection with his subordination in carefully reporting to his superiors the developments of the field as they presented themselves and his judgment as to the means that best could meet those developments, were "very prejudicial to his usefulness in emergencies." The acknowledged intelligence of General Grant precludes the possibility of accepting as sincere—save as an involuntary confession of incorrigible prejudice—the suggestion, thus made, that the very qualities pre-eminently requisite in a corps commander could be prejudicial to his usefulness when guided by an earnest loyalty such as all accord to General Warren. That General Grant himself, as a matter of fact, attached but little importance to the charges he insinuates against General Warren—save as they might affect the credulous public mind—is fully evidenced, not only by his intelligence, but also by his *Military History and Personal Memoirs* aided by the *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan*. The last named work has certainly made clear the fact, indicated on the pages of the preceding works, that, in General Sheridan's case when in command of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac from May 4, to May 7, 1864, General Grant not only sustained, but even rewarded, that officer for

exercising the right of thinking for himself and of reflecting upon his commander to an extent that even a moderate rendering of military law and ethics can class only as closely bordering upon open mutiny. Again—on pages 436-7 of his second volume, General Grant relates the dissatisfaction of General Sheridan at the order he (General Grant) had issued for the movements of March 29, 1865, because he believed himself to be therein ordered “to cut loose again from the Army of the Potomac” (the very order to secure which he had revolted against the command of General Meade ten months before), and that he (General Grant) followed and, in a private conversation, pacified his discontented subordinate by confidential explanations.

General Sheridan now makes the point even clearer still. On pages 112 and 113 of his second volume, referring to his Shenandoah Valley campaign of February, 1865, he says:—

Grant's orders were for me to destroy the Virginia Central Railroad and the James River Canal, capture Lynchburg if practicable, and then join General Sherman in North Carolina wherever he might be found, *or return to Winchester*, but as to joining Sherman I was to be governed by the state of affairs after the projected capture of Lynchburg.

Then, on page 119, he states:—

Being thus unable to cross until the river should fall, and knowing that it was impracticable to join General Sherman, *and useless to adhere to my alternative instructions to return to Winchester*, I now decided to destroy still more thoroughly the James River Canal and the Virginia Central Railroad *and then join General Grant in front of Petersburg*. I was master of the whole country north of the James as far down as Gooseland; hence the destruction of these arteries of supply could be easily compassed, *and feeling that the war was nearing its end, I desired my cavalry to be in at the death*.

On page 124, he continues:—

The transfer of my command from the Shenandoah Valley to

the field of operations in front of Petersburg was *not anticipated by General Grant*, indeed, the despatch brought from Columbia by my scouts, asking that supplies be sent me at the White House, *was the first word that reached him concerning the move. In view of my message* the general-in-chief decided to wait my arrival before beginning spring operations with the investing troops south of the James river, for he felt the importance of having my cavalry at hand in a campaign which he was convinced would wind up the war. We remained a few days at the White House When all was ready the column set out for Hancock Station, . . . and arriving there on the 27th of March, was in orders reunited with its comrades of the Second Division *The reunited corps was to enter upon the campaign as a separate army, I reporting directly to General Grant; the intention being thus to reward me for foregoing, of my own choice, my position as a department commander by joining the armies at Petersburg.*

On page 127, he states that when he met and reported to General Grant at City Point, the general-in-chief closed the conversation upon the Shenandoah Campaign "with the remark that it was rare a department commander voluntarily deprived himself of independence, *and added that I should not suffer for it.*" Continuing, in succeeding pages, he relates that, after reading a general letter of instructions prepared by General Grant for the coming movement, he showed plainly that he was dissatisfied with it, and immediately began to offer his objections to the programme in a somewhat emphatic manner, and that, when he had finished, General Grant quietly told him that the portions of the instructions to which he objected were only "a blind." On pages 132-3, relating the interview between General Grant, General Sherman, and himself, on the night of March 27, he states:—

. . . I made no comments on the projects for moving his own (General Sherman's) troops, but as soon as opportunity offered, dissented emphatically from the proposition to have me join the Army of the Tennessee, repeating in substance what I had

previously expressed to General Grant. My uneasiness made me somewhat too earnest, I fear, but General Grant *soon mollified me, and smoothed matters over* . . . so I pursued the subject no farther.

The details thus given by General Sheridan are substantially sustained by Generals Grant and Badeau.

It remains, therefore, that General Grant rewarded the insubordination of General Sheridan at Spottsylvania Court House by detaching him from the command of General Meade; that he again rewarded him, by changing for his benefit the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac into the independent command entitled "the army of the Shenandoah," after he (General Sheridan) had decided for himself that it was useless to adhere to the instructions under which he had been operating in the Shenandoah Valley, and had—in *defiance of rules and articles of war*—withdrawn his command from the department to which he had been assigned without any more urgent necessity than that, "feeling that the war was nearing its end, he [I] desired his [my] cavalry to be in at the death;" and that, finally, he "mollified" the same officer's emphatic discontent and objection to the duties to which his command might possibly be assigned, by concessions in his favor. *While General Sheridan boasts, and General Grant admits, such facts, one can scarcely credit with much of dignity the efforts of the last Generals of the U. S. Army to justify the arbitrary removal of General Warren from the command he graced, and from participation in the final triumph of the cause to which he had devoted the best years of his unselfish, earnest life.*

With regard to the sending of General Miles to

General Sheridan on the night of April 1-2, General Grant states in his report:—

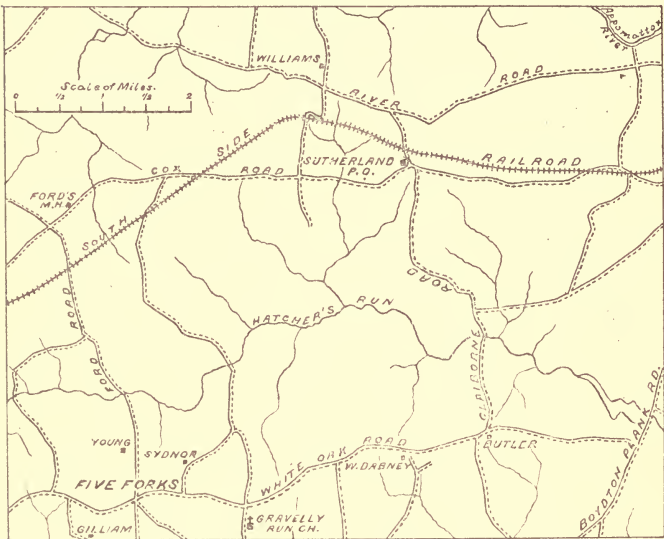
Some apprehensions filled my mind lest the enemy might desert his lines during the night, and by falling upon General Sheridan before assistance could reach him, drive him from his position and open the way for retreat. To guard against this, General Miles's division of Humphreys's corps was sent to reinforce him, and a bombardment was commenced and kept up until four o'clock in the morning (April 2), when an assault was ordered on the enemy's lines.

General Humphreys's report states that, in compliance with orders from General Grant, *at 5.30 p. m.*, April 1, he advanced General Miles's division, not only *toward*, but *across* the White Oak Road, and held the road in force, and that (by General Grant's order), *soon after midnight*, finding the enemy's lines in his front too strong to be broken, he sent General Miles down the White Oak Road to reinforce General Sheridan.

After the close of the engagement at Five Forks, two divisions of the Fifth Corps were posted for the night across the White Oak Road near Gravelly Run Church, and the third was put in position upon the Ford Road. Mackenzie's division of cavalry was left at the Ford Road crossing of Hatcher's Run, and the remainder of the cavalry (the Army of the Shenandoah) was held at and near Five Forks.

The extreme right of the Confederate intrenched lines rested upon Hatcher's Run, in timber, and about a third of a mile west of the Claiborne Road. Thence they extended to the left, crossing the Claiborne and White Oak roads just east of the forks, and covering the latter road to its junction with the Boydton Plank road, which they crossed, and again rested upon Hatcher's Run east of Burgess's Mill. The confronting lines of the Second Corps held close

up to these intrenchments. After the defeat of the Confederate forces at Five Forks, the Cavalry divisions of Generals Munford and the Lees united, after crossing Hatcher's Run, so as to cover the Ford Road crossing of that stream. They were joined during the night by four brigades of infantry, under General R. H. Anderson, sent out by General Lee, by routes north of Hatcher's Run, to cover the collection of General Pickett's disorganized troops and to take up a position at Sutherland Station. They were there joined, on the morning of April 2, by the remnants of General Pickett's command.



In view of the fact that, on April 7, General Grant, in personal command at Farmville, with at least two army corps present and ready to his hand, permitted the Second Corps to remain isolated at Cumberland Church, north of the Appomattox River, when holding at bay the entire remnant of the Army

of Northern Virginia, General Grant's solicitude for General Sheridan's safety at Five Forks certainly appears to have been excessive and unnecessary. It was manifest from the situation that General Lee was imperatively held to a defensive course. With the loss of the engagement at Five Forks, and the occupation of the White Oak Road by the left of the Second Corps, the roads south of the Appomattox River ceased to be available, as lines of retreat, for more than a small fraction of his army; but the Danville Railroad, and its connections with Lynchburg, still remained—*provided he could maintain his lines until the wagon-roads were passable*. There is nothing to indicate that, under the circumstances, General Lee could have invited inevitable, and irretrievable, disaster in the manner apprehended by General Grant. It is difficult to understand how the White Oak Road could have been opened as a way for retreat *except by the defeat of the Union Army*. That General Sheridan at Five Forks was efficiently covered upon his right by the position of the Second Corps upon and along the White Oak Road, is clearly indicated by the fact that, upon General Miles reporting to General Sheridan, that officer immediately ordered him to retrace his steps to the position he had left.

But General Sheridan (Vol. 2, pp. 172. 173) makes another point prominent and explanatory, when referring to General Miles's movements on April 2. He says:—

The night of the 1st of April, General Humphreys's corps—the Second—had extended its left *toward* the White Oak Road, and early next morning, under instructions from General Grant, Miles's division of that corps reported to me, and supporting him with Ayres's and Crawford's divisions of the Fifth Corps, I then directed him to advance toward Petersburg and attack the ene-

my's works at the intersection of the Claiborne and White Oak roads.

Such of the enemy as were still in the works Miles easily forced across Hatcher's Run, in the direction of Sutherland's depot, but the Confederates promptly took up a position north of the little stream, and Miles being anxious to attack, I gave him leave, but just at this time General Humphreys came up with a request to me from General Meade to return Miles. On this request I relinquished command of the division, when, supported by the Fifth Corps it could have broken in the enemy's right at a vital point; and I have always since regretted that I did so, for the message Humphreys conveyed was without authority from General Grant, by whom Miles had been sent to me, but thinking good feeling a desideratum just then, and wishing to avoid wrangles, I faced the Fifth Corps about and marched it down to Five Forks, and out the Ford Road to the crossing of Hatcher's Run. *After we had gone,* "General Grant, *intending this quarter of the field to be under my control*, ordered Humphreys with his other two divisions to move to the right, in toward Petersburg. This left Miles entirely unsupported, and his gallant attack made soon after was unsuccessful at first, but about three o'clock in the afternoon he carried the point which covered the retreat from Petersburg and Richmond.

Before the Warren Court of Inquiry (Record. pp. 127. 128) General Sheridan testifies that on the morning of April 2, he advanced with General Miles's division supported by the Fifth Corps and drove the enemy out of the intrenchments at the forks of the Claiborne and White Oak roads; that he captured 800 prisoners at the crossing of Hatcher's Run; that he came back as soon as he found they had gone from there; that he didn't care about them any more; that he saw General Humphreys, and General Humphreys's command; and states: "I told him *it was not any use for me to go up there*, and I went back so as to get to the railroad as quick as I could."

In the official report of Lieutenant-General Grant, it is stated that on the morning of April 2, "General Sheridan being advised of the condition of

affairs, *returned General Miles to his proper command.*" This corroborates the official report of General Humphreys, which states: "At 9 a. m. I received intelligence from General Miles that he was on his return, and about two miles from the position he had occupied the night before on the White Oak Road." This is also sustained by the despatch from General Meade to General Sheridan, which that officer appears to think he received at the hand of General Humphreys although the terms of the despatch do not support the supposition. As given in the Appendix to General Sheridan's report of May 16, 1865, that despatch is as follows:—

Headquarters Army of the Potomac.

April 2, 1865—10 a. m.

General: The enemy has abandoned his line in front of Humphreys, and is falling back to his own left, and said to be forming a little beyond Hatcher's Run.

Humphreys is coming out on the Boydton plank, and Miles on the Claiborne road. *General Humphreys has assumed command of Miles; the 5th Corps is left to you.* General Wright is moving down (south) the Boydton road, with General Ord covering his left. *We presume you to be on the Cox and River roads.* If General Humphreys hears you engaged he will move toward you. If you hear him engaged you are requested to move toward him.

Geo. G. Meade.

Major-General Commanding.

Major-General Sheridan

General Miles testified before the Warren Court of Inquiry (Record. p. 646) that he reported to General Sheridan as directed, on the night of April 1, and was instructed to be ready early in the morning, and that he reported again, about 5 o'clock in the morning, and received orders to move back and attack the enemy's line where it crossed the White Oak Road. He continues;

I moved back up this road, and sent word to General Hum-

phrey's notifying him of my approach and dispositions to attack that line at the junction of the road [White Oak and Claiborne Roads]. *Just as the enemy abandoned it, I followed them over to Sutherland Station, and had a very successful fight with them there.*

In his official report of April 21, 1865, General Humphreys, after stating the giving way of the enemy's lines in his front at 8.30 a. m., and the return of General Miles as above quoted, says:—

. . . I directed Mott to pursue the enemy by the White Oak and Claiborne roads, leading to Sutherland's Station on the Southside Railroad, Hays to follow Mott, and Miles to enter their works by the White Oak Road and take the Claiborne Road. From Miles's position on the White Oak Road he would probably lead. I expected by this movement to close in on the rear of that portion of the enemy's troops cut off from Petersburg, while Sheridan would probably strike their flank and front.

Upon the arrival of the Major-General commanding* the Army of the Potomac upon the ground these orders were changed. Mott and Hays were ordered to move on the Boydton Plank Road toward Petersburg, and connect on the right with Wright's corps, (the Sixth), and Miles was instructed to move toward Petersburg, by the first right-hand fork road after crossing Hatcher's Run, and connect with the other divisions.

These orders having been given, I rode over to Miles's division, which I overtook on the Claiborne Road about a mile beyond Hatcher's Run, meeting also General Sheridan in that vicinity. Upon hearing from the latter that he had not intended to return General Miles's division to my command, I declined to assume further command of it, and left it to carry out General Sheridan's instructions, whatever they might be. It had just got in contact with the enemy's rear.

In "The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," General Humphreys, avoiding even the appearance of reflecting on General Sheridan, say of this:

Finding that General Miles was satisfied that he could defeat the force before him, General Humphreys left him to accomplish it and rejoined his two other divisions, . . . "

It is evident that General Humphreys first overtook General Miles, and afterwards met General Sheridan and simply declined to dispute the claim

made by the latter to continued control of General Miles's division.

The diary of General Fred. T. Locke, Assistant Adjutant-General Fifth Army Corps, contains the following note for April 2, 1865 :

Marched at 6 a. m. *toward* the Claiborne Road. Received orders to cross Hatcher's Run to Cox Station. Arrived at South Side R. R. at 2 p. m.

It is about seven miles from the junction of the Claiborne and White Oak roads to the South Side Railroad at Cox Station, about one mile from the same junction to the Claiborne Road crossing of Hatcher's Run, and over two miles from that crossing to Sutherland Station. The report of General Charles Griffin, commanding the Fifth Army Corps, dated April 29, 1865, says :

On the morning of April 2d the command moved down the White Oak Road some two miles, and *massed near the "Dabney House," where it remained until about 11 a. m.*, when it returned to the "Five Forks" and moved across Hatcher's Run on the Ford Road.

The Dabney House was a mile west of the junction of the White Oak and Claiborne roads. It is manifest, therefore, that the Fifth Corps was not within immediate supporting distance of General Miles's attack upon Sutherland Station, when the order to counter-march upon Cox Station was received. On slight reflection, it is also manifest that it was impossible to "break in the enemy's right at a vital point" by an attack upon the force at bay at Sutherland Station, for that force was simply a detachment, cut off and separated from the right of the Confederate lines by a distance of about seven miles.

The writer has willingly corrected an error committed by him in a previous publication when, mis-

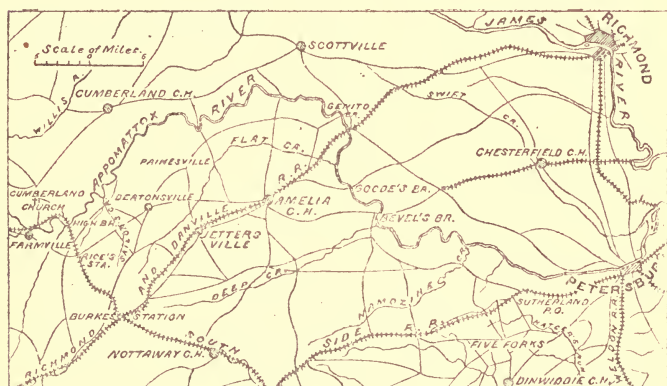
led by the conflicting statements of General Badeau's work, he defended General Sheridan from the imputation of having left General Miles unsupported in his gallant encounter with the enemy. Otherwise, the account as given by General Sheridan has claimed extended notice only as another illustration of the characteristics of his Memoirs, and as bearing upon his statement that *General Grant ordered General Humphreys to be recalled from the pursuit of the enemy in his front, because he intended that quarter of the field should be under General Sheridan's control.* General Badeau, also, makes this last point prominent in his Military History, but General Grant more prudently refrains. It is unnecessary to quote further from General Sheridan's words to illustrate or emphasize a fact concerning the recognition of which he seems to have been needlessly apprehensive.

General Grant states (Mem. Vol. 2. pp. 454-456) that, with General Meade, he entered Petersburg on the morning of April 3, and that General Meade, influenced by an improbable report, wished to cross the Appomattox river at that point in pursuit of the Confederate army. He says:—

I knew that Lee was no fool, as he would have been to have put himself and his army between two formidable streams like the James and Appomattox rivers, and between two such armies as those of the Potomac and the James. . . . My reply was that we did not want to follow him; we wanted to get ahead of him and cut him off, and if he would only stay in the position he [Meade] believed him to be in at that time, I wanted nothing better; that *when we got in possession of the Danville Railroad, at its crossing of the Appomattox river*, if we still found him between the two rivers, all we had to do was to move eastward and close him up.

Official records show that the evacuation of Petersburg by the Confederate army, commenced at 8 p. m. of April 2, General Longstreet's command

leading the column on the River Road north of the Appomattox River, which they recrossed at Goode's Bridge, and reached Amelia Court House some time in the afternoon of April 4. General Gordon's command was not far from the Court House by night of the same date, and General Mahone was at or near Goode's Bridge, ten or twelve miles distant. General Ewell's command did not reach the Court House till mid-day of April 5, and General Anderson's command, which, with General Fitz Lee's cavalry, had fallen back by the roads south of the Appomattox River, arrived on the morning of that day.



Recalling now, in connection with the opinion of General Grant just quoted, the statement of General Sheridan that General Miles, at Sutherland Station, "carried the point which covered the retreat from Petersburg and Richmond," a glance at any map of the environs of Petersburg will indicate that, had General Sheridan been with his command upon that line of retreat on the morning of April 2, as General Meade's despatch of 10 a. m. of that date states it was supposed he would be, and had General Humph-

reys been allowed to continue the pursuit of the enemy retreating before the Second Corps as he proposed and had commenced to do, there can be no doubt but that the whole of the Confederate force at Sutherland Station would have been destroyed or captured, and the way to the upper crossings of the Appomattox River have been left undisputed save by possible remnants of General Fitz Lee's cavalry. It would seem, therefore, that on the morning of April 2, General Grant had at least a very favorable chance to confine General Lee between the Appomattox and James rivers. As it was, *with General Sheridan controlling that portion of the field*, the Fifth Corps, by his order, wasted the morning of April 2, in a false march eastward from Five Forks, and the evening of April 3, found the Army of the Shenandoah, and the Fifth Army Corps, confronted by the Confederate rear-guard at Deep Creek — but little more than twenty miles west of Sutherland Station. Then ensued movements that space forbids to follow in detail here. Suffice it to say, that, — *the concentration of "the Army of the Shenandoah" with the Army of the Potomac, at Jettersville; — the retarding of the arrival of the infantry at that point until the afternoon*[of April 5, by the erratic movements of General Sheridan's cavalry upon the approaches from the east; — the fact that at midnight of that date General Sheridan could give no more definite account of the enemy then moving in full force, unretarded and unobserved, upon the unguarded bridges at Farmville, than such as enabled General Grant to "have no doubt *Lee was moving right then*"; — the sacrifice of General Read and Colonel Washburn, and their gallant little command, on the morning of

April 6;—the fact that the retreating Confederate army was first discovered at 9 a. m. of April 6, by *the cavalry escort attached to the headquarters of the Second Army Corps*;—the disappearance of the despatches of the commander of that corps giving information of the unequalled achievement of his troops in the combat which immediately followed, and which made possible General Sheridan's share in the victory at Sailor's Creek;—the ignoring of the isolated position of the Second Corps when at Cumberland Church on the afternoon of April 7, it held at bay north of the Appomattox River all that remained organized of the Army of Northern Virginia;—the separation of General Grant from General Meade, and from direct communication with General Lee, on the early morning of April 9;—these, and many other details of that movement from Petersburg to Appomattox Court House, admit of but one intelligible explanation—that claimed by Generals Badeau and Sheridan, and tacitly admitted by General Grant.

The Army of the Potomac has never asked to share the reputation, or the responsibility, attaching to the peculiar tactics of that campaign; but it will be an ungrateful country indeed that fails to recognize and award that army—tried and true as few armies have ever been—the respect and gratitude due to the heroic loyalty and self-forgetfulness that nerved its efforts, and in every trial proved it, in the words of its noble chief, “regardless of any other consideration than the vital one of destroying the Army of Northern Virginia.”



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